

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM NEEDS

SOUTH CENTRAL MINNESOTA

APRIL 1970



CONSULTANTS IN EDUCATION

EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES, INC.

151 SILVER LAKE ROAD • NEW BRIGHTON, MINNESOTA 55112 • PHONE: 612-636-0177

A STUDY OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN AND
THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM NEEDS
IN SOUTH CENTRAL MINNESOTA

THIS STUDY WAS CONDUCTED
WITH FUNDS - TITLE VI - ESEA



Educational Management Services, Inc.
151 Silver Lake Road
New Brighton, Minnesota 55112
(612) 636-0177

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	TRENDS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMING.....	12
	Special Education in Perspective.....	14
	Special Education Program Organization.....	20
	Special Learning Disabilities	23
	Prescriptive System Model	25
	Summary	27
III.	INTER DISTRICT ORGANIZATION	28
	Inter district Cooperation in Minnesota	36
IV.	POPULATION AND PREVALENCE ESTIMATES	40
	Method of Enrollment Projections	45
	Projected Enrollment for the Albert Lea-Austin Area	46
	Translating Population Projections Into Incidence Categories	57
	Prevalence Estimates	68
V.	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE INTER DISTRICT COOPERATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS	73
	REFERENCES	103

LIST OF EXHIBITS

EXHIBIT	PAGE
I. Projected Enrollment K-8, U.S., 1968-1977.....	43
II. Projected Enrollment K-12, U.S., 1968-1977.....	44
III. Albert Lea Public Schools Projected Enrollment K-12	48
IV. Albert Lea Public Schools Projected Enrollment K-12 and Ages 0-5	50
V. Albert Lea Area Schools Projected Enrollment K-12	51
VI. Austin Public Schools Projected Enrollment K-12...	53
VII. Austin Public Schools Projected Enrollment K-12 and Ages 0-5	54
VIII. Austin Area Schools Projected Enrollment K-12	56
IX. Estimated Prevalence of Handicapping Conditions for the Albert Lea Area Cooperative	70
X. Estimated Prevalence of Handicapping Conditions for the Austin Area Cooperative	71

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study of inter district cooperation for special education programs has been conducted with funds authorized by Title VI of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965. The project was initiated with a recognition that there is need for long range planning of special education services as well as the necessity of inter district cooperation to provide a comprehensive special education program.

Thirteen school districts located in Faribault, Freeborn, Mower, and Waseca Counties participated in the study. These southern Minnesota districts are:

Adams	District 491
Albert Lea	District 241
Alden	District 242
Austin	District 492
Bricelyn	District 217
Elkton	District 494
Ellendale	District 762
Freeborn	District 244
Grand Meadow	District 495
LeRoy	District 499
Minnesota Lake	District 223
Rose Creek	District 498
Wells	District 224

Each of these districts was interviewed to obtain data on its present special education programs and projected needs. Enrollment information was obtained from these schools as well as from

Glenville and New Richland. Other school districts in the area have also indicated interest in joining an inter district cooperative project for special education programs and services.

Three basic assumptions have under girded this study:

1. The emotional, social, educational, and prevocational needs of exceptional students require a comprehensive program of services.
2. A large enough student population is absolutely necessary in order to develop a comprehensive special education program.
3. Local school districts, regardless of size, must participate in some type of inter district cooperation in special education programs and services if they are to serve all of their students.

Each of these observations will be explored in more detail in the following pages.

The emotional, social, and prevocational needs of exceptional students require a comprehensive program of services.

Comprehensive educational opportunities for all students are made possible through the provision of programs and services identified as necessary and desirable to meet the educational needs at each level within the educational system. It is now generally recognized that each student should have the opportunity to participate in an educational program which will fully meet his individual educational needs. A correlate of this statement is that appropriate services should be available to alleviate social, emotional, and learning handicaps which might interfere in the

maximum utilization of individual potential. As a consequence, special education programs and services are now viewed more as a part of the general education program rather than as separate entities. The past few years have witnessed a dramatic shift in the emphasis of special education programming. Greater attention is being directed to students who have educational needs or learning patterns which are not fully met by the regular educational program. Segregated, self-contained classes for handicapped students are giving way to greater integration of pupils into the mainstream educational program. Ancillary personnel such as psychologists, social workers, and resource teachers are now viewed as essential to the total educational program.

The need to have a comprehensive program of services is recognized in Minnesota where all school districts, regardless of size, are required by legislative mandate to provide or arrange that suitable provisions are made for:

1. An approved speech correction and language therapy program
2. An approved program of instruction and service for all retarded children
3. An approved program of home-hospital instruction
4. An approved program and services for all children with learning disabilities
5. An approved program of instruction and services for all eligible hearing impaired children
6. An approved program of instruction and services for all eligible visually impaired children

7. An approved program of instruction and services for all crippled/orthopedically handicapped children
8. An approved program of instruction and services for all multiply handicapped children.

The State Department of Education also recommends that each district should provide or see that suitable provisions are made for trainable retarded, gifted, and culturally disadvantaged students. In addition, the State Department asserts that every child should have available to him the following diagnostic services: educational, psychological, psychiatric, neurological, social case work, general medical, dental, orthopedic, audio logical, and ophthalmological.

In different degrees, all of the districts involved in this study have been unable to conform fully to the regulations and recommendations of the Minnesota State Department of Education. Some of their efforts have fallen short in terms of adequacy and quality of programs and services. Many reasons were cited by the various schools for their inability to provide a comprehensive and/or quality special education program. These included unavailability of qualified personnel, lack of educational and/or referral resources, prohibitions of costs and geography, lack of special education leadership, and other factors. These findings are consistent with those of an earlier state special education survey completed in 1968. For these same reasons 87 percent of the school districts with 3,000 or less students indicated that they would be interested in an inter district program of special education.

A large enough population is absolutely necessary in order to develop a comprehensive special education program.

The minimum number of pupils required for a complete special education program is difficult to specify. There is the further question of how many students are required for a service to be offered efficiently and effectively. Some services demand a greater pupil population base than others. For example, in order to have a reasonable economical and feasible program for the educable mentally retarded, a school district would need to have a minimum K-12 school population of approximately 3,000 students to have classes at the primary (K-3), intermediate elementary (4-6), junior high, and senior high school levels. An enrollment of 6,000 is needed to operate at least one trainable retarded class at each of two levels. A student enrollment of approximately 1,700 students is desirable for the employment of a full-time speech therapist. However, a school district of 300 students could utilize the services of a full-time teacher/tutor for children with learning disabilities .

Size of the student population is of great concern in this study for two separate, but related reasons. Two school systems, Albert Lea and Austin, each has approximately 7,000 students. This population alone is sufficient to carry on many special education programs and services. The enrollment of these two school districts accounts for approximately two-thirds of the total number of students considered in this study. Wells has

approximately 1,000 students. The other ten school districts range in numbers from approximately 250 to 700 students. Two cities, Albert Lea and Austin, contain the greatest proportion of the total enrollment of the area being considered for this inter district special education program. The remaining schools are small in comparison and would find it difficult to develop and maintain by themselves a comprehensive special education program and services.

Since it has been established that size is an important variable in the provision of special education services and programs, the following statistics and observations become meaningful.

- ITEM: Only four districts (Albert Lea, Austin, Grand Meadow and Wells) maintain classes for the educable mentally retarded. The programs at Albert Lea, Austin, and Wells have both elementary and secondary classes.
- ITEM: Only one district (Austin) has a qualified special education administrator.
- ITEM: Three districts (Albert Lea, Austin, and Wells) maintain classes for the trainable retarded. These classes serve students of a wide age range.
- ITEM: Only one district (Austin) has a full-time school psychologist. All other districts are limited to part-time service or no service at all.
- ITEM: Only one district (Austin) employs a school social worker. No other district has any school social work service.
- ITEM: Only two districts (Albert Lea and Austin) have programs for children with special learning disabilities. Neither of these districts has such programs at the secondary school level.
- ITEM: Only six of the thirteen districts report remedial reading services. Many of these are part of Title I projects.

- ITEM: Speech therapy services are available on a full-time basis in only two districts (Albert Lea and Austin). Four other districts (Adams, Elkton, Grand Meadow, and Wells) indicate the availability of part-time services.
- ITEM: Three districts (Austin, Albert Lea, and Wells) employ full-time school nurses. Seven districts (Adams, Elkton, Ellendale, Bricelyn, Grand Meadow, LeRoy, and Rose Creek) report limited county nursing services. The other three districts did not indicate the availability of nursing services.
- ITEM: Data from the schools indicate 29 students with visual impairments, 72 students with hearing impairments, and 148 students who are physically handicapped. There is no precise identification of these cases. The majority of these students are in the Austin-Albert Lea schools.
- ITEM: Seven districts (Albert Lea, Austin, Ellendale, Bricelyn, Grand Meadow, LeRoy, and Wells) have full-time guidance services. Three districts (Adams, Elkton, and Rose Creek) have part-time counselors. Three districts are without counselors.

The provisions made for special education programs and other ancillary services in the various districts are quite understandable when factors such as present finances, the student population base, the stage of development of special education programs, and geography are considered. Criteria Recommendations of the Minnesota State Department of Education summarizes the implication of size.

It should be recognized that the establishment of minimum school district elementary and secondary enrollments, which make it feasible to provide breadth and depth of curriculum offerings in general education, are not applicable as a base for providing comprehensive special education programs and services (p. 19).

Local school districts, regardless of size, must participate in some type of inter district cooperation in special education programs and services if they are to serve all of their students.

Providing specialized classroom instruction and services to handicapped children with low incidence disabilities, particularly the hearing impaired, the visually impaired, the multiply handicapped, the physically handicapped, and the seriously emotionally disturbed, is feasible only when there is a substantial student population. While the Minnesota State Department of Education notes that a K-12 student enrollment of 20,000 or more would be necessary to provide a comprehensive special education program for children with these conditions, school districts with a minimum K-12 enrollment of 10,000 students will be able to provide the major share of the intensive diagnostic services needed. In either case, it seems clear that all districts in this study are dependent in varying degrees on cooperative or area wide organizational arrangements. Inter district programs for special education have become a necessary and viable structure to provide for the needs of handicapped students. There are many advantages to such an approach among which are the following:

1. The structure of the inter district program, definition of objectives, and determination of special education needs are accomplished at the local level. An inter-district cooperative program can be designed and developed to meet the specific requirements of the member districts.

2. More comprehensive educational opportunities can be provided to those in need of special education programs and services. Equitable educational opportunities can be made available in all districts to meet differences in individual pupil needs, interests, and capabilities.
3. All special education programs and supporting services can be maintained at an acceptable level of quality or excellence. Contributing factors to this quality or excellence include: breadth and scope of program offerings, special education leadership personnel, qualified staff, material resources, and a framework for special education services.
4. All programs and services can be appropriately coordinated and articulated, both vertically and horizontally. Sequential special education programming can be developed.
5. The structure for special education can provide for an efficient organization and utilization of resources. The structure should facilitate the optimum use of human time and effort with adequate and appropriate availability of materials, equipment and facilities.
6. Special education programs and services can be flexible to respond to varying conditions and requirements. They can be changed or expanded to meet educational needs as these are identified.
7. There can be maximum educational returns for the financial investment by the districts. More efficient and effective use can be made of special education personnel and programs. Districts are obligated only for the amount of service given to resident students.
8. Size and geographic location of districts become a less relevant factor in special education programs and services.
9. Special education programs and services would be more stable and not be subject to momentary influences or factors as is the case for one district.
10. Special education programs can be made responsive to the needs and desires of the member districts of the inter district cooperative.

A major concern expressed by some districts relates to the possible loss of local control for educational programming for some of their children when inter district cooperation is sought. To a degree, there is some loss or delegation of local control of special education programs with inter district services. However, this loss is more than balanced by the increased quality and scope of services made possible for handicapped children through an inter district program.

CHAPTER II

TRENDS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

CHAPTER II

TRENDS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

The last two years have seen a surge of inter district cooperative programs of special education in Minnesota. One interpretation simply attributes this growth to the availability of federal funds for some inter district projects. However, the issues are more complex. Inter district special education programs are a result of a combination of forces and a recognition of educational needs. Impetus toward inter district special education programs has come about through a process of evolution rather than a sudden discovery. In a sense, the practice represents an idea whose time has come.

Some historical background should be considered before attempting to propose an inter district organization for special education programs. This chapter will deal with various facets of the organization of special education, among which are trends and considerations of special education and educational organization at both the national and state levels. These factors should be of interest to the districts in this study as they consider the components of inter district cooperation.

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN PERSPECTIVE

The primary objective of any educational system is to provide instruction for all of its children. Few would argue that every child regardless of his background, heritage, abilities or disabilities, deserves equal opportunity to receive the best instruction to meet his educational and personal needs. This is not to say, however, that every child should be subjected to exactly the same materials, methods, and procedures. In order to have "equal opportunity" for an education, many children need rather different treatment than the majority. They may require very specialized educational services if they are to attain maximum development and become productive and contributing members of society. Belief in this philosophy has led the American educational system to pursue its obligations for providing special education services for a wide variety of handicapped students.

From a historical standpoint special education has been limited primarily to serving a limited number of students in specified "categories" of handicaps. Special education has often been isolated from the regular educational program. Students in special education programs were often viewed as only the responsibility of a few special educators. More recently, attitudes toward special education have changed rather dramatically. The role of special education is becoming one of aiding general educational

systems in achieving the goal of serving educationally handicapped students within the mainstream of education. Special education continues to provide highly specialized services required by more severely handicapped students.

The growth and acceptance of a wide range of services to exceptional children are a result of a host of elements including sociological, legislative, and educational factors.

Sociological

The general public has developed greater tolerance, understanding, and acceptance of handicapped persons. Some of these considerations have been related to economics. It has been demonstrated that special education programs and services should be viewed as investments rather than expenditures and that handicapped children should be seen as assets rather than liabilities. Public enlightenment about the handicapped has been influenced by the mass media, particularly television. The fact that socially prominent families have handicapped children emphasizes the point that such children can be born into any family. This country, particularly in the last decade, has experienced a great concern about discrimination, the underprivileged, and the culturally deprived. This concern has been translated into a greater availability of special education services.

Legislative

Major stimulation to progress in special education has been provided by federal legislation. Dollars provide leadership and incentive in both a direct and indirect manner. The federal legislation enacted since 1957 has a direct correlation with the growth of special education. The legislation in the early years of this period was for training of leaders and professional special education personnel as well as for research and demonstration projects. This was necessary to build a solid foundation for special education. A major landmark for special education was legislative enactment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Public Law 89-10) in 1965. It included the handicapped among those defined as eligible under this Act. Title I unleashed a well-spring of funds which have been piped into special education programs through employment of additional personnel, early identification of handicapped children, in-service programs, and numerous other facilities and services for exceptional children. Title VI, as amended, provides grants to states to initiate and improve programs of special education. Also included in federal legislation have been funds for regional resource centers and dissemination of information about special education. A more recent enactment has been the vocational education legislation which provides for direct special education involvement and use of funds available for vocational-technical education. This action may provide better means of vocational preparation of older handicapped students.

State legislation also has provided impetus to special education. In Minnesota, under strong pressure from parent groups, the legislature first passed mandatory special education laws in 1957. This legislation mandated that all school districts must provide for special instruction and services for handicapped children who were residents of that district. Along with the "stick" of mandatory legislation, the legislature also provides the "carrot" of state sharing of costs of special education through a system of partial reimbursements for personnel, materials, and equipment costs. These special education aids gave encouragement for the instigation or expansion of programs.

Educational

General educators have changed their attitudes toward special education and the role that it can play in the general educational program. In the past, many educators have viewed special education in the light of special, self-contained classes comprised of students "identified" as having some category of handicapping condition. Recent research has demonstrated the efficacy of having many students with special education needs integrated into regular school programs rather than segregated into special classes.

-Acceptance of this view opens up a number of organizational options for special education. In a thought provoking article, Dunn (1968) stated:

Another reason self contained special classes are less justifiable today than in the past is that regular school programs are now better able to deal with individual differences in pupils. No longer is the choice just between a self contained special class and a self contained regular classroom. Although the impact of the American Revolution in Education is just beginning to be felt and is still more an ideal than a reality, special education should begin moving now to fit into a changing general education program and to assist in achieving the program's goals.

Dunn noted that there are four powerful forces at work which influence the role and organization of special education. First, there are changes in school organization. Greater use is being made of concepts such as team teaching, ungraded primary departments, and flexible groupings. Radical departures in school organization are projected and include such things as educational parks in place of neighborhood schools and metropolitan school districts which cut across inner cities and wealthy suburbs. Second, there are curricular changes. Many new and exciting options for teaching reading and other subjects are evolving. More programmed textbooks and other materials are finding their way into the classroom. Third, there are changes in professional school personnel. More ancillary personnel such as school psychologists, social workers, and resource teachers are employed by schools. Furthermore, some teachers are now functioning in different ways and are increasingly prepared to better deal with individual differences. Fourth, there are differences or changes in "hardware." Computerized teaching, teaching machines, feedback typewriters, educational television, videotapes, and other machines are making auto instruction possible as never before.

General educators are accepting the fact that special education is not a precisely or narrowly defined field. Definitions or decisions about who is educationally handicapped or who can remain in regular instructional programs are relative and reflect the conditions of general education. The determination of which child can be educated in the regular program and which child must be educated outside the regular program is to a large degree determined by the flexibility and available options for individualizing instruction within general education.

There are other reasons why general education has become more involved in special education. Among other things, the controversy over "Why Johnny Can't Read" focused attention on learning disabilities. Preschool and compensatory education programs have gained prominence. There are pressures to prevent school drop-outs and to reduce the alienation of youth from the educational processes. Ability tracking has also come under closer scrutiny after being declared unconstitutional in the *Hobson vs. Hanson* decision delivered by Judge J. Skelly Wright in Washington, D.C.

Summary

Special education programs and services have assumed a position of increased importance in recent years. This is due to a number of factors. First, the educational problems and challenges

facing school districts have become more complex. Second, special education programs and services are now viewed more as an integral part of the general educational program rather than as separate entities. Third, there has been a growth and proliferation of special education programs and services because of changes in funding patterns and program strategies at the local, state, and federal levels.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

The organization of special education programs varies from area to area geographically. The organization of any particular program and its services often reflects historical precedents, identified needs, educational objectives, personnel, finances, and perceived priorities. While there are lists of special education components which should be included in a comprehensive program for exceptional children, there are no lists regarding service options, priorities of service, and program delivery systems. These factors are important if special education is to merge with, influence, and support the general educational system.

Willenberg (1967) developed a helpful rationale for the internal organization of special education programs which would support the ebb and flow of pupil placement, instructional resources, and other needed services. Willenberg conceptualized a seven-level, flexible, internal organization from a base where one finds the majority of

exceptional pupils requiring minimal program modifications. Each successive level above the base represents the need for greater modification in the social milieu of the child, and, in many cases, the extent and nature of instruction and other services. The levels of organization are:

Level One. Organization for the child who needs adjunctive services only, such as special transportation or medication.

Level Two. Organization for the child who requires some supplementary teaching in the regular classroom.

Level Three. Organization for the child who requires specialized supplementary teaching, such as that provided in integrated programs for the visually handicapped or speech therapy.

Level Four. Organization for the child who requires special day class instruction.

Level Five. Organization for the child who requires full-time instruction and ancillary services in a special day school such as that for the multi-handicapped or trainable mentally retarded children.

Level Six. Organization to provide for the child who is home-bound or hospitalized.

Level Seven. Organization for the child placed in an institution.

Willenberg notes that with a flexible system of internal organization the special education program could provide an array of offerings to match the child's changing requirements throughout the course of his school years. It is clearly apparent that Willenberg's conceptualization also allows for a cascade of services and a variety of alternatives in designing specific programs for children with a large variety of handicaps. His system can be

adapted for planning the special education organization of programs and services and is consistent with different models of special education.

There are a number of considerations which must go into organizing special education programs and services. The preceding chapter referred to the factor of size of the student population as well as the correlate of the severity of the handicapping conditions. Problems related to geography, such as distances between schools and/or between the home and the proper special education programs, sometimes are difficult to solve. There may also be architectural barriers which influence the development of programs. In a sense, all of these are fixed variables over which there is little control.

Other constraints on the special education program may stem from the organization of the regular instructional program. A vital ingredient is the internal consistency of the regular instructional program with the special education program. Special education programs and facilities should be developed to support and enhance the instructional program of which it is a part. For example, if an inter district program is present, it would not be consistent or harmonious to have some components of the special education program completely decentralized. If a program model is adopted which has as its basis the inter district cooperative, then considerations of personnel and curriculum must be consistent with the decisions

about organization. Districts have found that, as they move towards or adopt a model of inter district cooperation for special education, certain interfacing of programs and responsibilities are necessary and/or appropriate. The basic consideration, however, is that of harmony and consistency with the overall structure, organization, and plan for special education.

Two recent but related considerations for special education programming have appeared and merit specific attention. These are the concept of special learning disabilities and the model of prescriptive instruction.

SPECIAL LEARNING DISABILITIES

The term "special learning disabilities" has different meanings to various people. There are some who criticize it as being nothing more than another "category" of special education disability. These critics contend that the designation as "special learning disabilities" does little to define more precisely the educational disabilities and the needs of individual students. However, they do not see learning disabilities as a broad concept or a way that cuts across categories and allows consideration of a wide variety of children with learning problems. Siegel (1968) has very concisely summarized the strength of the concept of learning disabilities:

The chief strength of the emphasis on learning disabilities would seem to be that it makes a renewed plea for good teaching - i.e., teaching based on an understanding of the child's needs as well as an awareness of what the specific task entails. Seen in this light, the focus upon specific learning disabilities can, within the framework of (rather than by seeking to displace) the traditional medical/psychological categorization system, give some direction and emphasis to the special educators.

The term special learning disabilities is broad and is used for the purpose of including many specific manifestations of learning problems. It should not be construed as an appropriate definition for educational grouping or curriculum planning. Rather, it should be viewed as a way to assume responsibility for meeting the needs of students who are educationally handicapped but who do not neatly fit into more traditional modes of considering special education students.

There are at least four developments which have supported the emergence of the concept of special learning disabilities. The first is the development of an educational philosophy which emphasizes specific learning attributes. This change confirms and expands the educational expectation of individual differences. A second development is that of better diagnostic instruments. Newer instruments allow for more specific assessment of strengths and deficits. Any diagnosis should have as its primary goal preventive or remedial planning for a student. A third consideration is the development of better methods and materials for remediation. A great deal is currently being done to relate methods

of instruction and use of materials to the particular learning characteristics of each student. A fourth development is that of flexible programming and scheduling. Special education is moving toward the greater use of itinerant and resource persons as a means of helping individual children to be successful in peer-group settings. These persons also serve as consultants to regular teachers in assisting them to understand the learning problems of children and to devise materials and instructional strategies.

Minnesota has been in the forefront of the movement to adopt special learning disabilities programs. The State Department of Education has produced guidelines for the S.L.D. programs which encourage flexibility. These guidelines provide information on program components, organization, and personnel considerations. Such a program is eligible for financial support through state special education aids.

Special learning disabilities is a broad concept, and these programs serve students with many kinds of educational handicaps. There are many ways that such programs and services can be organized. One model which has gained wide recognition is based on prescriptive teaching.

PREScriptive SYSTEM MODEL

Special education has long been concerned with individual differences and the needs of each child. The prescriptive model

for education is an individualized approach combined with systematization. It provides structure and organization to activities which, to some degree, have long been present in education. In the prescriptive system model, these individual elements are blended into a whole. The core of the model is prescriptive teaching. Peter (1965) describes prescriptive teaching as:

A method of utilizing diagnostic information for the modification of educational programs for children with learning problems. It accomplishes this purpose by determining the educational relevance of the child's disability, and devising teaching procedures to yield desirable changes in the child's academic progress, emotional conditions, and social adjustment.

The focus of prescriptive teaching is on a student's present needs and problems. Historically, a good deal of attention has been given to a child's past. The past, of course, is not reversible or modifiable while present problems are subject to change.

The prescriptive system provides for meaningful interaction of a variety of professionals in solving the educational problems of a handicapped child. The system is based on the concept of a communication circuit with each phase prescribing or determining each succeeding phase. The prescriptive system model can be conceptualized as having four phases.

PHASE I - REFERRAL: The student having school difficulties is referred to the appropriate department. An assessment is made of the student's problems utilizing whatever members of a team are appropriate. These may include psychologist, social worker,

school nurse, family physician, materials specialist, school counselor, and others as indicated by the nature of the problem. The team translates all available data into educationally relevant terms.

PHASE II - REPORTING: The information on the student is reported and interpreted to the classroom teacher. Educational planning takes place utilizing the consultations of specialists if necessary.

PHASE III - IMPLEMENTATION: The educational plan is put into effect.

PHASE IV - FOLLOW-UP: This is an important part of an effective program of prescription teaching. After implementation, the student's progress and behavior are observed to determine the outcomes or results of the prescribed modifications. This information is used by the team to make any modifications of the prescription. The cycle is begun again and continues until success is achieved.

The prescriptive system model can be adapted to different kinds of special education organizations. It provides a systematic way for utilization of specialized staff and materials. The main limitations of the model are imposed by the availability of options at each phase of the system.

Summary

This chapter has discussed some trends in special education and some of the forces which influence programs. Specific attention was given to the development of special learning disabilities programs and the prescriptive system model for special education. These must be part of any proposal for an inter district special education program.

CHAPTER III

INTER DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

CHAPTER III

INTER DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

The major purpose and function of a structure and/or organization in education is to provide the programs and services essential to meet the identified needs of all the students at an acceptable level of quality or excellence with efficiency in organization and economy of operation. Programs require certain kinds of services to support them. It is the responsibility of the structural organization of education to provide for programs and services which fulfill the need requirements. As identified needs change, so must programs and services. As programs and services change in relation to changing needs, so must the structural organization. Needs to be met come first; structural organization is only supportive.

Cooperation in special education programs is commonly one of the areas of need where local school districts have found it necessary or advantageous to join cooperatively with other districts to provide services and programs. Inter district programs for special education generally come about or are shaped by recognition of some or all of the following factors.

1. Insufficient population base to provide for a comprehensive special education program.
2. Insufficient financial base to provide all special education services.

3. Insufficient equipment, materials and facilities for special education programs.
4. Insufficient organizational structure and staffing patterns for special education programs.

In addition, there are considerations related to legislative actions or legal requirements.

Population Base

Previous chapters have emphasized the need for a sufficiently large student population in order to provide some special education programs and services. Generally, attention has been directed to the inability of smaller districts to provide a comprehensive special education programs. It should be pointed out, however, that even larger school districts are dependent on the surrounding districts for providing students to be served in programs for those with low incidence handicaps. Without drawing from this larger population base, it would be difficult to maintain a comprehensive, articulated, and sequential program of services for these students.

It is possible that too much emphasis has been placed upon size alone in the discussion of inter district special education programs. In actuality, special education services and programs are on a continuum. There are some services which all but the very smallest district can provide. It must be recognized that the size factor for comprehensive and equitable educational opportunity for all students, wherever they live, is and must be

a variable, never an absolute. Further, there is the basic necessity of adapting any structure for special education to often greatly divergent factors such as geography, transportation and related socio-economic conditions.

Financial Base

The problems of financial support for public education have been and probably will continue to be present. Each school district necessarily must function within a financial budget which reflects the educational priorities of that district. Districts are finding it increasingly difficult to satisfy all the financial demands necessitated by some programs. The educational needs of some children will require more money than others. There is a higher cost associated with special education programs because such services represent individualized attempts to deal with the needs of handicapped children.

There are also variable patterns of wealth in school districts. Even in more rural areas some districts have certain economic advantages over others of equal size. It is not uncommon for one school district to have a major industrial or utility development within its boundaries and for the children of the employees who assist in production of this wealth to live in a more economically and educationally impoverished school district. There is likely to be a direct correlation of the special education needs to the conditions in the less able school district.

There are special education needs of youth that must be met. Consequently, the financial resources of all the people must be utilized, regardless of where they live. Many districts have found that the most productive way to meet this challenge is through cooperative efforts with other school districts.

Equipment, Materials and Facilities

In some respects, this topic is only an extension of the previous two considerations since they are closely related. Specialized equipment, materials and facilities generally have a high price tag. There are districts where it is not feasible to have special education programs due to real limitations of physical facilities. Specialized materials play a prominent part in any special education program. For example, the Minnesota State Department of Education recommends that there be a special education instructional materials, processing, preparation and storage center readily accessible to all school districts operating special education programs.

There is considerable expense connected with the acquisition of needed equipment, materials and facilities for special education. These costs are more pronounced if these resources are not used by a sufficiently large student population. Inter-district efforts often facilitate the spreading of costs over a broader number of students and financial base.

Organizational Structure and Staffing Patterns

The quality of any special education program is largely dependent on the direction, leadership and personnel involved. Most school districts with less than 5000 students have not found it feasible to employ special education administrators. The organization and direction of the programs often is left to persons with little professional training, experience or interest in special education. Consequently, many districts have special education services which have developed without knowledgeable direction and which lack a sequential and articulated set of goals. Staff members of such special education departments are often left to their own inclinations in determining the scope and operation of the special education programs. In-service opportunities and program development are at a lower level than that which is either adequate or desirable.

A recent study (Weatherman & Ayers, 1960) indicated that many superintendents in Minnesota viewed the recruitment of qualified special education personnel as a difficult task. These specialists apparently want to be employed by districts which have capable leadership of their special education program and supporting staff.

The need for "quality control" in special education programs has led many districts to cooperative efforts. This practice recognizes that fragmented and poorly directed efforts are not sufficient to meet the needs of handicapped students.

Legislative and Legal Aspects

The availability and organization of education on an inter district basis vary across the country. A major determinant is the legislative actions and legal restrictions in each state. During the past twenty years there was a trend in the United States toward school consolidation. Minnesota is among the states which have mandated school district consolidation. Isenberg (1969) indicates that, despite the rapid consolidation of schools, nearly half of the nation's school districts still serve under 300 students; and more than two-thirds have enrollments of less than 1200.

Throughout the country there are various types of special education programs involving more than one district as part of a regional service agency. The legal authority for types of school organization is often influential in determining the structure of the program. Intermediate units or districts have been authorized in several states. For example, the Texas education system has dramatically reorganized to have intermediate units around twenty educational service centers. Washington has reorganized into fourteen intermediate units. Nebraska has seventeen regional service units.

Iowa and Michigan have intermediate units which carry on complete service functions for handicapped or learning disabled children, including diagnostic and educational functions. These units offer other services such as subject matter specialists,

in-service training, data processing systems and testing services; they can offer needed services that often cannot be provided by the local district alone.

Structurally and financially, the intermediate unit is between the state and the local district. It is charged with certain educational responsibilities which vary from state to state. In many instances, the intermediate unit has the power to levy taxes for its purposes. Special education views such regional agencies as having several advantages. These are a solid base for planning since there are set boundaries, tax base, and an administrative policy structure. There is provision for involvement of all school districts within a region. Inter-regional programs for low incidence handicapped may be developed. Critics of intermediate units argue that relatively little involvement of local districts goes into the creation of this agency. Although it is mandatory to be part of the regional cooperative, there often is no provision for mandatory cooperation. Further, special education is only one of the services provided by the cooperative. As such, it must take its place among the priorities of the agency.

The Committee of Ten (1968), a California study committee charged with reviewing and recommending changes in their state intermediate unit concept, has delineated the general role and function of the regional unit. Other states have similar models.

Some of the observations and conclusions of the Committee of Ten are applicable to planning inter district projects in Minnesota. The Committee felt that considerable flexibility is necessary in determining the various roles of the regional and local units which depend on conditions in the area. Local districts should be encouraged to provide services for themselves when they are able to do so. The Committee stated that one of the unique functions of the intermediate unit is planning strategies for attacking educational problems on a broad, multi-district basis. But the Committee maintained that the most important functions of the cooperative are coordination and leadership. It concluded that, for the intermediate unit to be successful, the integrity of each district must be respected and the vehicle for implementing change must emphasize cooperation rather than authority.

INTER DISTRICT COOPERATION IN MINNESOTA

While the legislature in Minnesota has mandated that school districts provide for students with certain handicapping conditions, Minnesota law does not require inter district cooperation for making provisions. In fact, the laws of Minnesota are largely neutral on the subject of inter district cooperation. Nonetheless, there are no statutes which expressly forbid cooperative action. Permissive or enabling power is granted by statutes (Section 471-59, Subdivision 1) as follows:

"Two or more governmental units, by agreement entered into through action of their governing bodies, may jointly or cooperatively exercise any power common to the contracting parties or similar power"

This Section also refers specifically to school districts as one kind of governmental unit. The statute further specifies that, if agreement calls for a joint board of control, such a board must be representative of all the parties to the agreements,

Many school districts in Minnesota have thus found inter-district cooperation in one form or another to be a means by which the mandatory provisions of the laws on special education can be met. There have been a number of informal arrangements between school districts including some of the districts participating in this study. These arrangements have concerned programs and personnel. The agreements are usually predicated on a district having a special education program for children with certain disabilities. Neighboring districts then contract to send students on a tuition basis. Another variation of such informal arrangements is the purchase of time or the sharing of professional personnel between districts. Such agreements have the advantage of being relatively simple and straightforward while supplying some programs and services which might not be otherwise available to students. An informal structure, by its very nature, cannot be used as a means of expansion to a comprehensive program of special education services. The informal arrangements might be likened to a patchwork quilt

worked on by several persons. It often lacks overall planning and coordination. Consequently, it often leads naturally to gaps in programs, staff and services.

Finance is a major factor which determines the type of inter district cooperation. Minnesota state law does not provide for payment of school foundation aids or other categorical aids such as transportation and special education to any organization other than the local school district. Since approximately half of the funds for operation of special education programs come from state sources, it is not feasible to have an organizational structure which limits these funds. Therefore, school districts look to forms of cooperative programs which conform to Minnesota statutes as well as provide a means of financing.

In Minnesota, a "host" district type of arrangement has been employed. One school district assumes the responsibility for employment of personnel and disbursement of funds. Cooperating districts agree to pay their pro-rata share of the expense of the program. In the case of special education programs, the host district receives directly from the state the reimbursement for special aids. Foundation aid is paid to the district of residence. A pattern of tuition payments is established to cover costs of special education programs not provided by these aids.

There are several examples of inter district cooperation in Minnesota. Perhaps the most widespread are the educational research and development organizations in different sections of the state. There are also an increasing number of formal, inter district, cooperative, special education programs within the state. These are often on a county-wide basis or in an area served by a larger school district. There are no specific legal requirements for these inter district programs other than those which typically apply to school districts in Minnesota.

A common denominator which is present in the inter district special education programs is the employment of a special education administrator in a leadership position.

CHAPTER IV

POPULATION AND PREVALENCE ESTIMATES

CHAPTER IV POPULATION AND

PREVALENCE ESTIMATES

The most basic question asked by educators in regard to long-range planning seek information reflecting future school enrollments. This problem is universal to all educational institutions. It is especially critical in the area of elementary and secondary public education. The right of a free public education to every child places upon the educational management team the burden of careful, and, whenever possible, exact planning. Much of the planning is built on anticipated student numbers which usually result from factors over which the educational institution has little or no control.

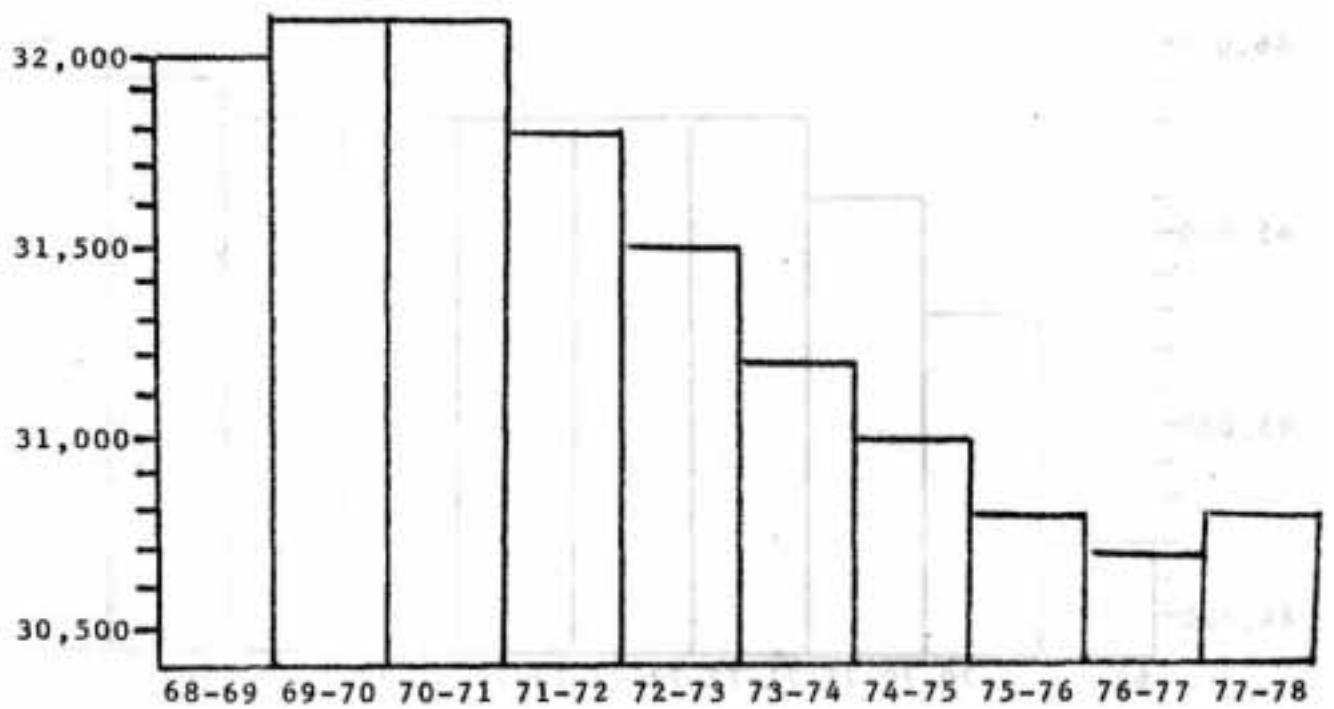
There obviously exists a relationship between school enrollments and birth rates. The birth rate reached its peak at 30.0 (babies born per 1,000 population) in 1910. At the present time the birth rate has reached a new low of 17.9 per 1,000. Some of this decrease may be attributed to the pill. However, the decline in birth rates actually began before the licensing of the pill (NEA Research Bulletin, 1968). The degree to which the pill and other contraceptive devices will further decrease the birth rate is very much in question. This fact in itself implies that the population should begin to stabilize or

even decrease in the near future. However, the number of women aged 20-24 will increase by approximately two million in the next seven years (NEA Research Bulletin, 1968). This represents over a 35 percent increase in the number of potential child bearers. However, when both of these factors are taken into consideration, the U.S. Office of Education enrollment projections for K-8 for the years 1968-1977 show a general trend of decreasing enrollments. Exhibit I presents this information in graphical form. These projections indicate that there will be a steady decrease in enrollment K-8 until about 1977-78, at which time an increase will again appear.

Exhibit II presents the projected enrollments for K-12 in the United States for years 1968-1977. As can be seen from the graph in Exhibit II, the trend is stabilizing. From these two graphs it is then evident that any increase in enrollments will be in the later grades, that is, in junior and senior high school. These students would arise from births prior to the decline in the birth rate.

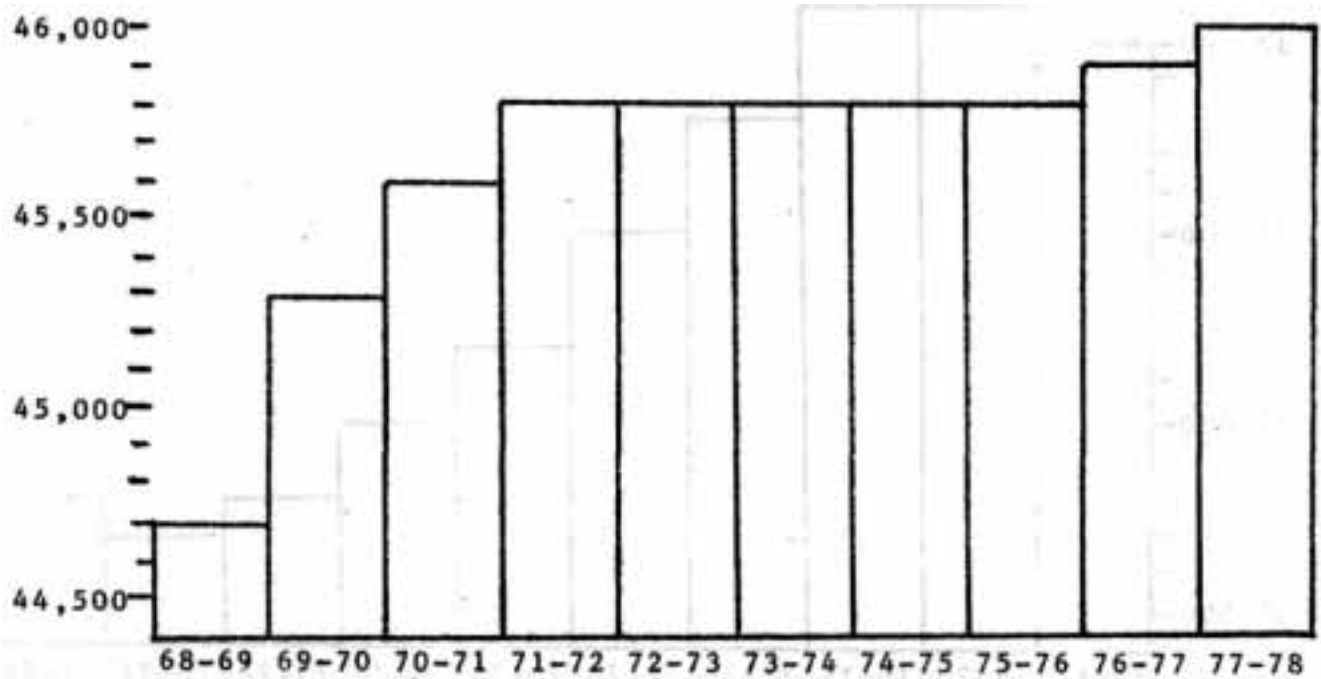
A second factor which confronts people engaged in enrollment projection is population migration. The migration figure cannot be simply added above and beyond the live birth projection if a sizeable migration pattern exists. If the composite of this group of people is different from that of the native inhabitants, the migration pattern will soon alter the existing birth rate pattern.

EXHIBIT I
PROJECTED ENROLLMENT K-8, U.S.
1968-1977



SOURCE: Projections of Educational Statistics to 1977-78.
U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.
1968.

EXHIBIT II
PROJECTED ENROLLMENT K-12, U.S.
1968-1977



SOURCE: Projections of Educational Statistics to 1977-78.
U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare,
1968.

Method of Enrollment Projections

The enrollment projections of this chapter are based upon historical trends using a cohort survival ratio method. Looking beyond the present, it must be assumed that the future will bring the same trend as indicated in the past. Thus, in all instances, there is a steady decrease of enrollments projected for the next ten years. However, these trends do not seem realistic to the study team. Rather, a more conservative decrease in student enrollment is projected for both the Austin and Albert Lea areas. These figures are derived from examination of not only the enrollment trends, but factors such as birth rates, net migration in and out of the areas and economic conditions. At this point in time, it is impossible to foresee all those factors which will influence enrollments in the southern Minnesota area. In light of this uncertainty, for each enrollment projection a best guess projection was developed. This best guess assumes essentially that the enrollment figures will stabilize after about five years. Should sudden changes in the economic climate of the areas prevail, such as new industry moving into the area or present industry leaving the area, these enrollment projections will not be accurate. However, at this time they appear to be reasonable estimates of future enrollments in the Albert Lea-Austin areas and will serve as the basis for projection of incidence figures.

The enrollment projections in this chapter are designed as a means of estimating base population in the two service areas. For this study, enrollment information can be categorized into the following: (1) number of students that will have to be served, and (2) the kinds of students that will have to be served. This information has critical implications for a special education study. It is upon the gross estimation of the number of students to be served that incidence figures of specific disabilities may be applied to obtain the predicted number of students to be served in a special education program. Among the factors which could be influenced by projected enrollments are the model for educational programming, types of special education services required, vocational service centers and numbers as well as types of personnel employed. The enrollment projections which follow in this chapter will later be applied against incidence figures obtained from the U.S. Office of Education and from a recently completed study of Northeastern Minnesota. From such figures it will be possible to estimate the range of children to be served in the various categories of handicapped children.

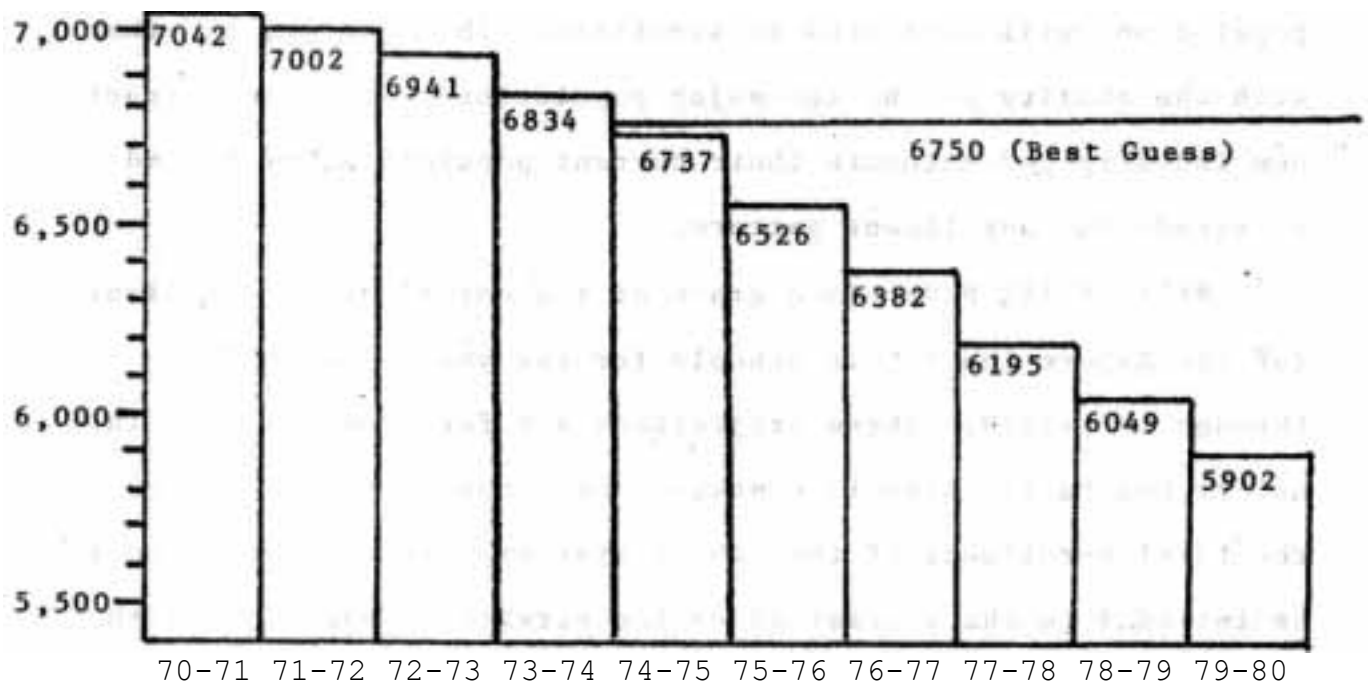
Projected Enrollments for the Albert Lea-Austin Areas

The state of Minnesota appears to follow the national pattern of enrollments. Likewise, the community areas of

Albert Lea and Austin tend to follow those same patterns. Within the study area two major centers of population are the cities of Albert Lea and Austin. The surrounding communities are generally rural, agricultural areas. The present trend in the nation and in the Albert Lea and Austin areas is not only for a general decrease in the birth rate but also a net migration out of agricultural areas into the urban areas. This pattern is clearly evident in southern Minnesota. The agricultural area surrounding the two major population centers has shown a very dramatic decrease in population. This trend, however, seems to be reversing in that net migration from the farming areas has apparently reached its peak and the farm population will soon tend to stabilize. This factor, together with the ability of the two major population centers to attract new industry and maintain their current population, will tend to steady the enrollment pattern.

Exhibit III presents a graph of the enrollment projections for the Albert Lea Public Schools for the years 1970-1971 through 1979-1980. These projections are for grades K-12. The Albert Lea Public Schools contain approximately 60 percent of the total enrollment of the school systems which are proposed to be included in the special education service cooperative in the Albert Lea area. As indicated previously in this chapter, the general trend is for a steady decrease in the enrollments grades

EXHIBIT III
ALBERT LEA PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROJECTED ENROLLMENT, K-12



K-12. This is clearly reflected in Exhibit III. However, it is the feeling of the study team that the enrollment of the Albert Lea Public Schools will stabilize at approximately 6,750 pupils in the years 1974-75. It seems quite unreasonable, given the information available today, to project the sharp decrease to continue over the ten year period as indicated in Exhibit III.

Exhibit IV presents projected enrollments for the Albert Lea area schools for K-12 and ages 0-5. The information presented in this graph again indicates a steady decreasing trend of enrollment and census. However, the best guess of the study team is that the enrollment and census figures will stabilize somewhere around the 15,000 mark in the years 1974-75.

Of particular interest to this study was the projected enrollments of the Albert Lea area schools, grades K-12. Exhibit V presents these projected figures. The graph again shows the general downward trend of enrollment. However, the study team estimates that the enrollment will stabilize around 11,750. This figure then becomes the base population figure on which educational programs and models were developed for the Albert Lea area special education cooperative.

The second major area of population centers in the city of Austin. Recent population trends in Austin indicate that that school district is experiencing a more rapid decrease in

EXHIBIT IV
ALBERT LEA PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROJECTED ENROLLMENT
K-12 and Ages 0-5

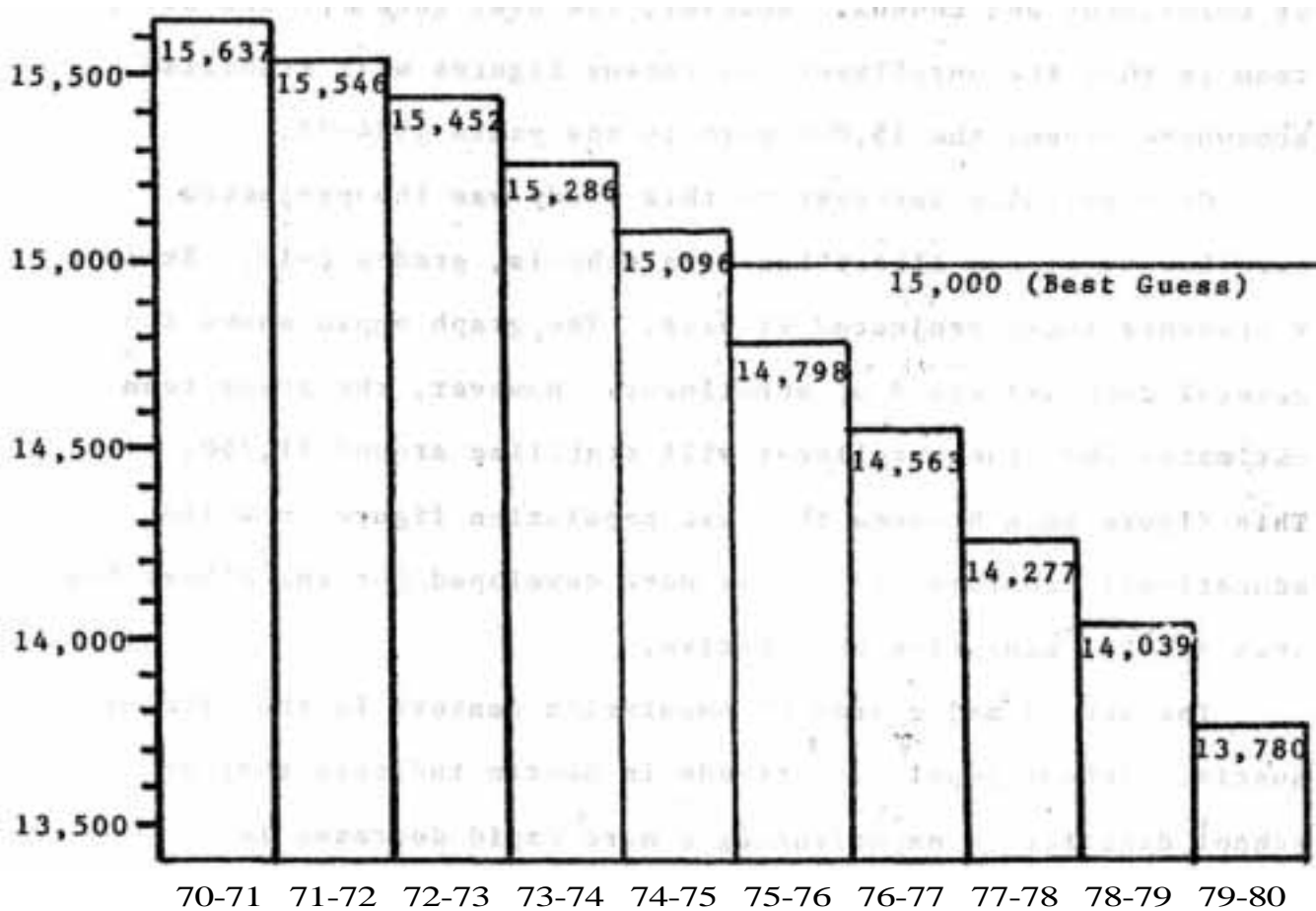
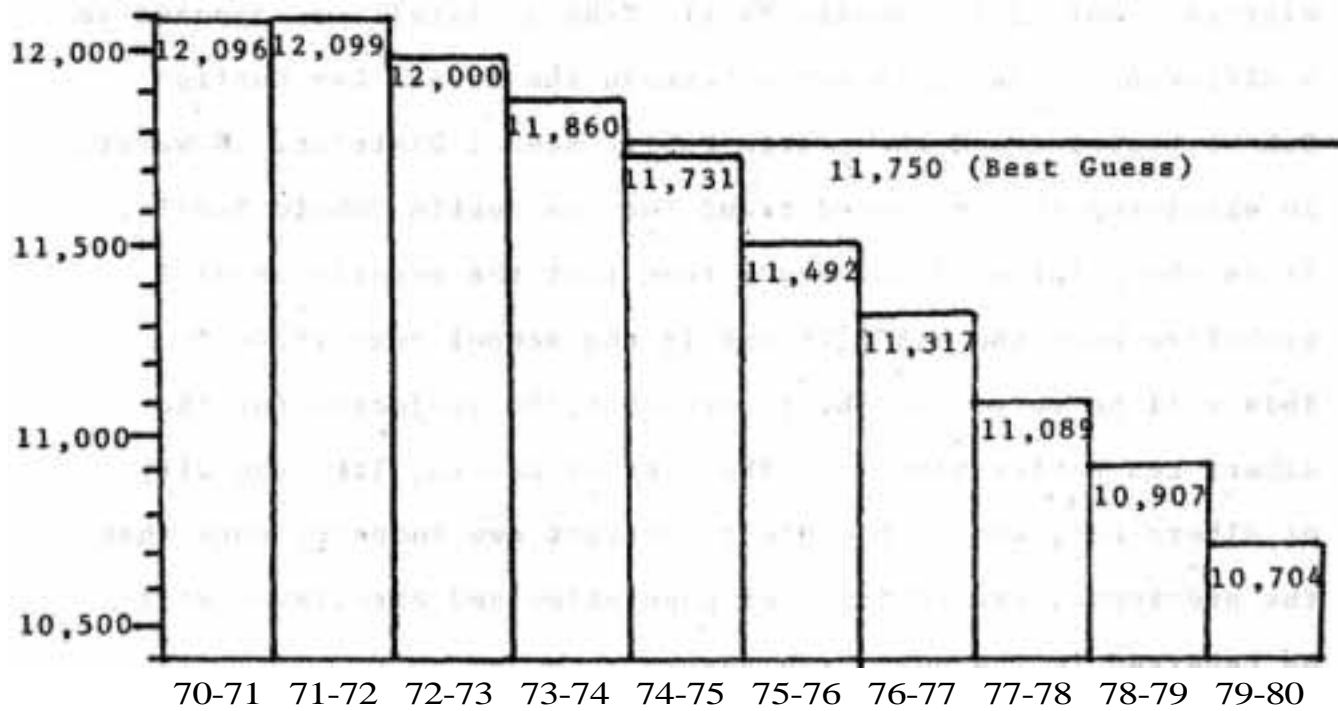


EXHIBIT V
ALBERT LEA AREA SCHOOLS PROJECTED ENROLLMENT, K-12



enrollment than in the Albert Lea Public Schools. This information is reflected in Exhibit VI. The projected trend for the Austin Public Schools, grades K-12, indicates that an enrollment of approximately 7,500 projected for the year 1970-71 will decrease to approximately 5,200 in the year 1979-80. This decreasing trend is faster than that projected for Albert Lea Public Schools. The projected enrollment decrease for Austin Public Schools indicates that approximately 2,300 students will be lost in the next ten years. This compares with a projected decrease of approximately 1,000 students for the Albert Lea Public Schools. Such a decrease might be attributed to net migration out of the Austin Public School District as opposed to a differential in birth rates between the Albert Lea Public School District and the Austin Public School District. However, in examining the projected trend for the Austin Public Schools, it is the opinion of the study team that the enrollment will stabilize near the 6,800 figure in the school year 1974-75. This will be very near the figure of 6,750 projected for the Albert Lea Public Schools. The city of Austin, like the city of Albert Lea, should be able to attract new industry such that the previous downward trend of population and enrollment will be reversed in the next five years.

The projected enrollments for the Austin area schools, grades K-12 and ages 0-5, are contained in Exhibit VII. These

EXHIBIT VI
AUSTIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROJECTED ENROLLMENTS, K-12

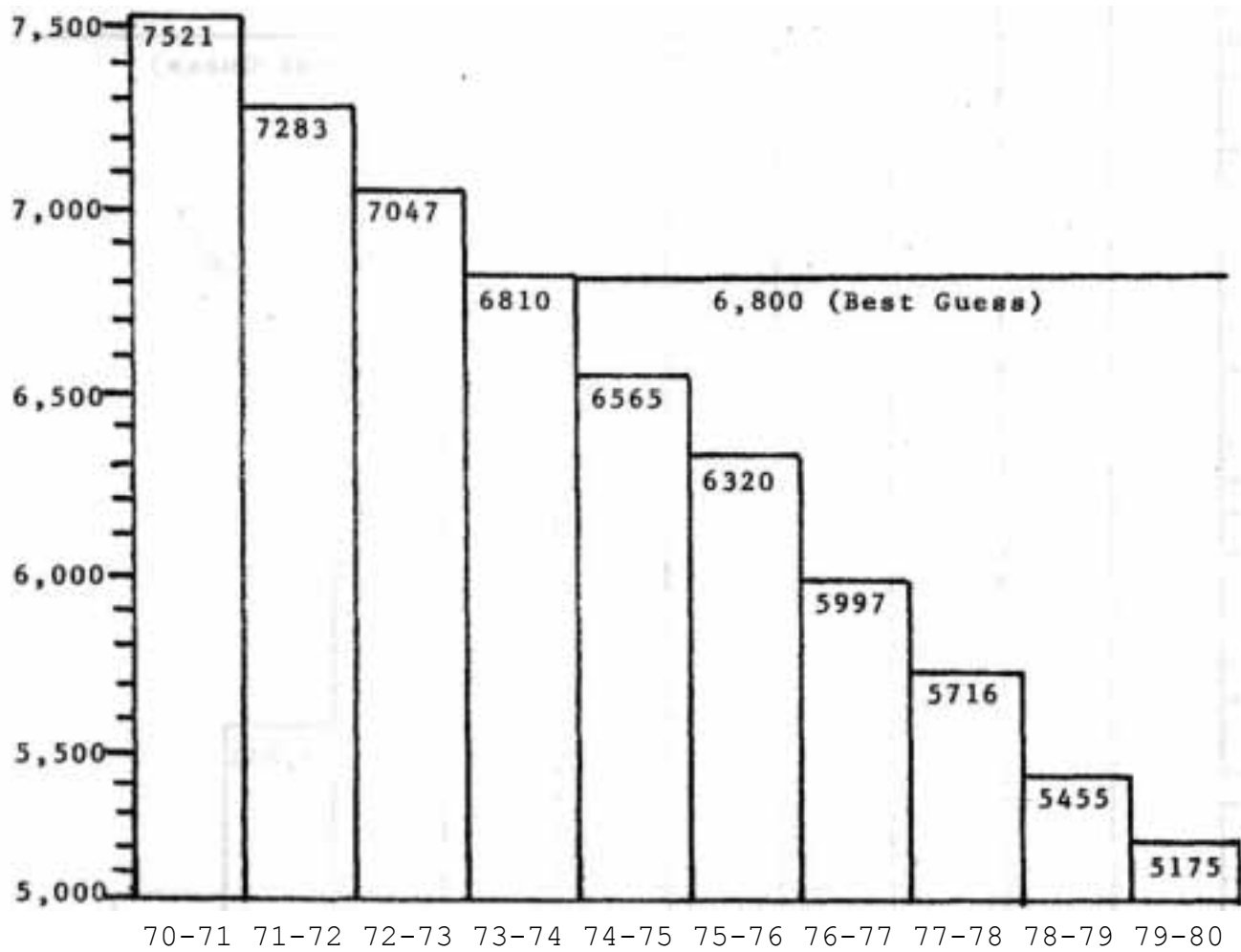
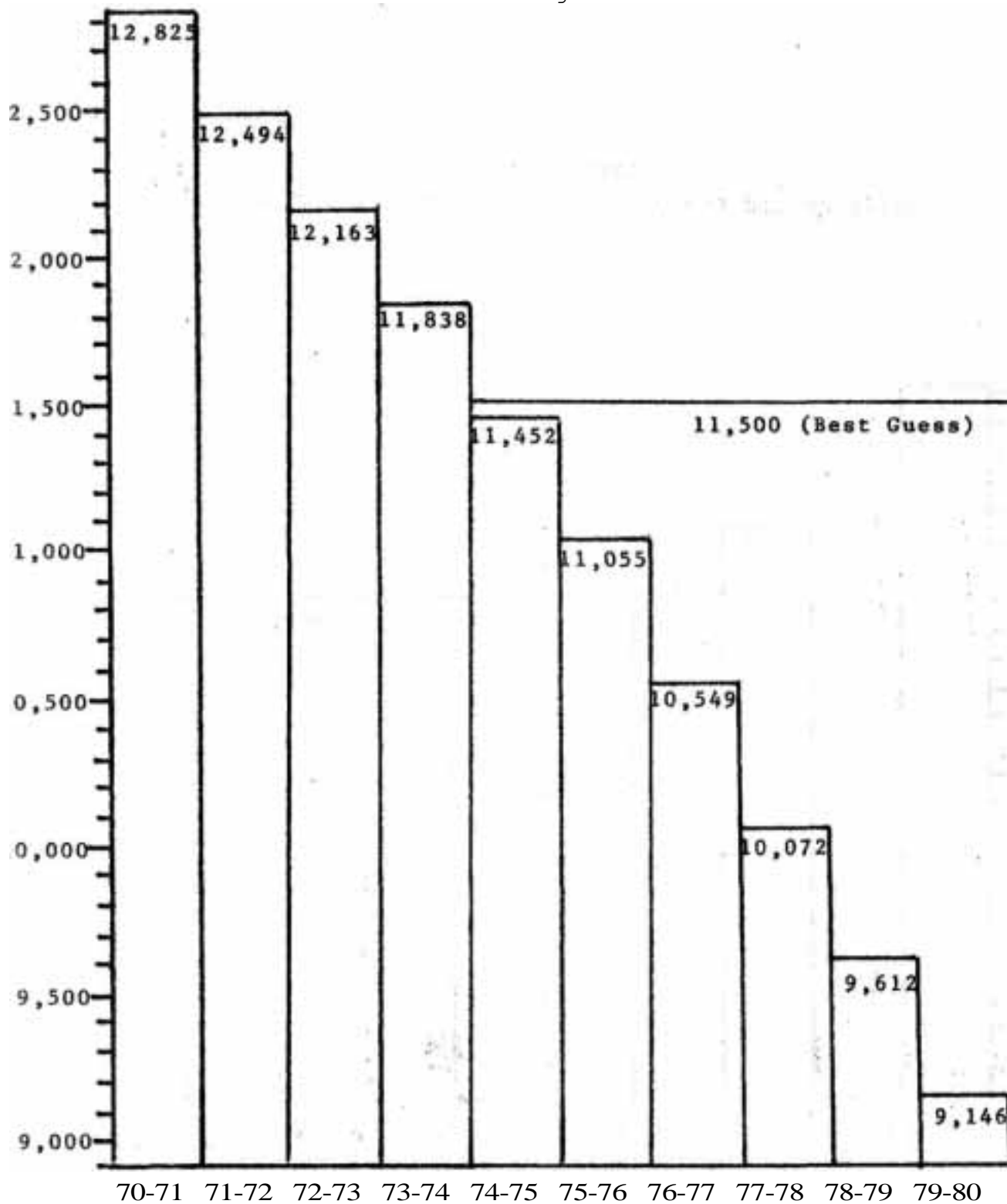
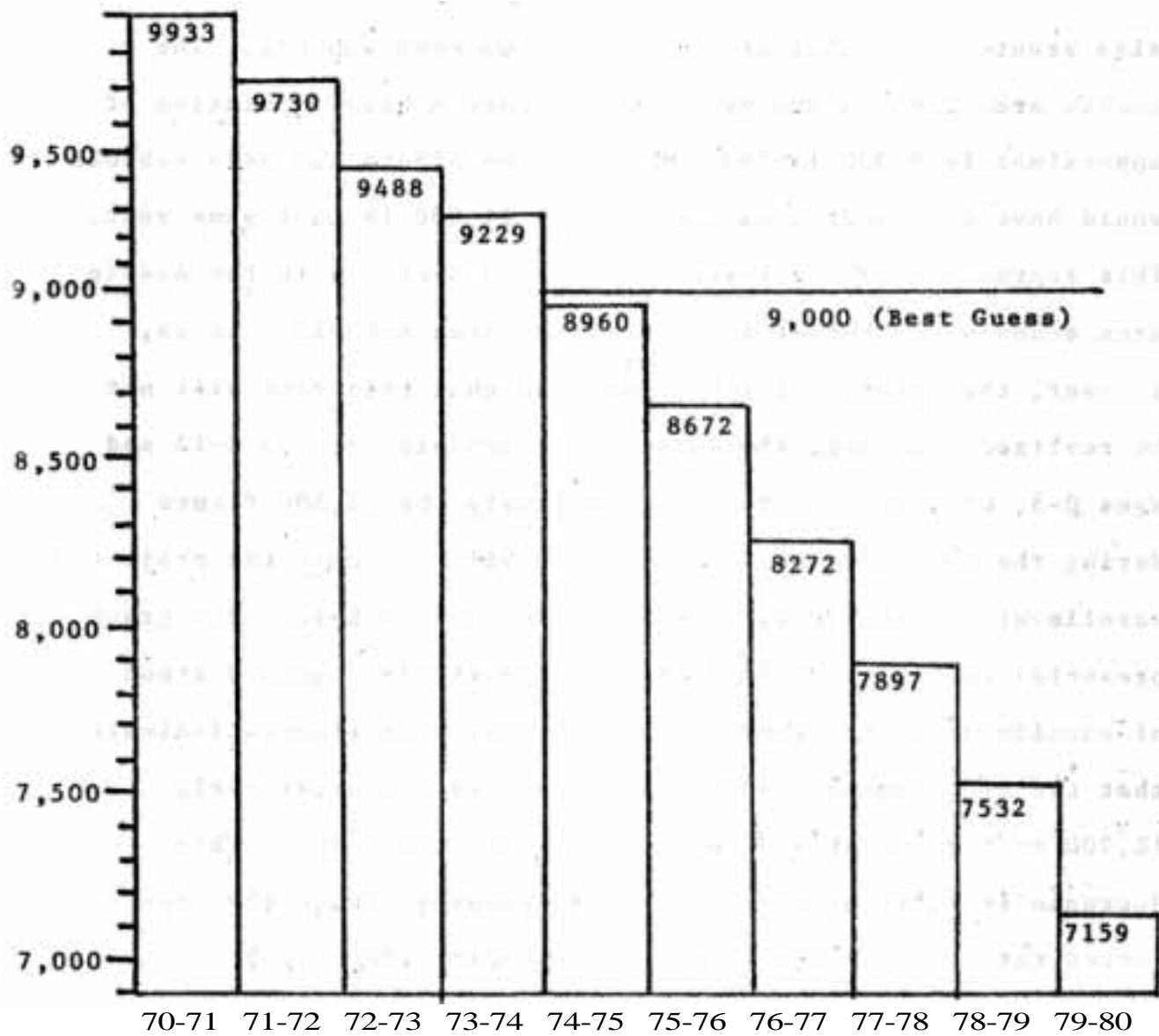


EXHIBIT VII
AUSTIN AREA SCHOOLS PROJECTED ENROLLMENTS K-
12 and Ages 0-5



figures show the projected enrollment and census figures of the schools in the Austin area which are proposed to form the Austin area special education cooperative. The projected base population of approximately 13,000 in the Austin area for year 1970-71 is approximately 2,500 less than that projected for the Albert Lea area. The downward trend in the Austin area is also greater than that of the Albert Lea area schools. The Austin area schools are projected to have a base population of approximately 9,000 in 1970-80 while the Albert Lea area schools would have a projected base of nearly 14,000 in that same year. This represents nearly twice the rate of decrease in the Austin area schools as that of the Albert Lea area schools. It is, however, the opinion of the study team that this rate will not be realized. Rather, the Austin area schools, grades K-12 and ages 0-5, will stabilize at approximately the 11,500 figure during the same time period. Exhibit VIII presents the projected enrollments of the Austin area schools, grades K-12. The graph presented in Exhibit VIII indicates the steady downward trend of enrollment in the Austin area schools. The figures indicate that the projected enrollment will drop from approximately 10,000 to approximately 7,000 in the next ten years. This decrease is again proceeding at approximately twice the projected rate of the Albert Lea area schools. Such a sharp decrease appears unreasonable given the economic and population characteristics of the Austin area. There appears to be much

EXHIBIT VIII
AUSTIN AREA SCHOOLS PROJECTED ENROLLMENTS, K-12



similarity between the Austin and Albert Lea areas as far as population and economy. It is therefore the feeling of the study team that the projected enrollments for the Austin area schools, grades K-12, will stabilize around the 9,000 figure during the school year 1974-75. This projected population of 9,000 students will provide a means for projecting incidence figures of handicapped children in the Austin area schools.

Translating Population Projections Into Incidence Categories

As stated at the outset of this chapter, the primary object of enrollment projections is to establish a reasonable estimate for base population in the two service areas. The determined population figures for K-12 in the Albert Lea and Austin areas were 11,750 and 9,000, respectively. From these bases it is then possible to project the prevalence of handicapped children into the following categories:

- a) Mentally Retarded, including trainable and educable
mentally retarded
- b) Physically Handicapped, including orthopedically
impaired
- c) Speech Handicapped
- d) Hearing Impaired, including deaf and hard of hearing
- e) Visually Impaired, including blind and partially sighted
- f) Emotionally Disturbed/Socially Maladjusted, including
learning disabilities

Each of these categories is discussed in detail below.

Mentally Retarded

The Manual on Terminology and Classification of the American Association on Mental Deficiency (1961) states that "mental retardation refers to sub average general intellectual functioning which originates during the developmental period and is associated with an impairment in adaptive behavior" (p. 3), Sub average intellectual functioning, according to the manual is indicated by the attainment of a relatively low score on a standardized general intelligence test. Diagnosis of mental retardation, however, also requires evidence of impaired adaptive behavior in the areas of maturation, learning, and/or social adjustment.

For educational purposes, a distinction is often made between educable (EMR) and trainable (TMR) mentally retarded children. Educable mental retardation refers to those pupils with IQ scores between approximately 50 and 80 who are encountering difficulty in learning basic school subjects. The term "trainable mentally retarded" refers to students with IQ's between approximately 30 and 50. Curricular provisions for educable and trainable pupils should be quite different even though there is a certain degree of overlap between the two groups in a number of school-related behaviors.

The educational program for TMR children attempts to develop adequacy in self-help skills, social skills, vocational skills and leisure time interests (Rosenzweig & Long, 1960). A TMR child is generally unable to acquire rudimentary academic skills beyond the first or second grade level. Moreover, many of the children classified as TMR display a wide variety of concomitant handicapping conditions in addition to low general intelligence and impairment in adaptive behavior. The employment prognosis for TMR persons is typically limited to situations which permit a high degree of close supervision.

The recommended number of TMR pupils per classroom is 10; however, the number may vary from 6 to 15, depending upon factors such as variation of mental abilities and amount of school experience. In order to provide a single class for students between the ages of 6 and 13, a base population of approximately 2,000 pupils is required. The low incidence of this particular handicapping condition invariably necessitates the establishment of inter district cooperative programs.

Special education programs for elementary educable mentally retarded (EMR) pupils should provide an appropriate and comprehensive approach which would include (1) training in language, numbers and reading, (2) social development, (3) motor development and perceptual training, (4) mobility and orientation experiences, and (5) programs of parent consultation. Integration of students into regular classroom programs and activities

is often advantageous as long as their specific individual needs are given consideration. The curriculum at the junior and senior high school levels should provide opportunity for both pre-vocational and on-the-job training.

Physically Handicapped

Children designated as physically handicapped are comprised of those with orthopedic handicaps and chronic health problems. Orthopedic impairments consist, for the most part, of malformations and malfunctions of bones, joints, or muscles (Dunn, 1963). The term "chronic health conditions" refers to a variety of physical conditions, including rheumatic fever, cardiac disorders, nephritis, hepatitis, epilepsy, allergies, diabetes and many others.

An increasing accumulation of evidence suggests that the incidence of children with multiple physical and other disabilities is growing. In a survey of handicapped pupils in Georgia, Wishis (1956) found one-third of the children had one disability, one-third had two, and one-third had three or more. Thus, at least two-third of this particular sample could be considered to be multiply handicapped. For educational planning, the concept of "major handicap" of the child should be given paramount consideration.

While the number of non-sensory, physically handicapped children has increased during the last two decades, the percentage increase in services to these children has been much

lower than those reported for other areas of handicap, such as the mentally retarded (Mackie, 1965). Recent and dramatic advances in both medical science and educational services have no doubt contributed substantially toward reducing the need to provide services to many physically handicapped children with mild to moderate impairments. Coincidental with these developments, however, have been the resultant effects of improved medical procedures which have preserved the lives of many children who formerly succumbed at an early age. Many of these children, as well as those who had been affected by major viral infections such as rubella, have contributed disproportionately to the noticeable increase in the prevalence of children with combined handicapping conditions of a more severe nature. Thus, while the overall prevalence of physically handicapped children is decreasing, the numbers of children with severe, multiple impairments may be increasing.

The type of program for the physically handicapped depends on the nature and severity of the handicapping condition. Usually there is some medical evaluation of the case which establishes the severity of the handicap. In addition, school personnel such as nurses, psychologists, and social workers are involved in various phases of the evaluation process. There are some students who require special class placement in a school or facility with the proper staff and equipment to deal

with their problems. Students with less severe problems, however, may be maintained in regular class placement with proper planning and provision of auxiliary services. Such services might include itinerant teachers to administer supplemental instruction. Still other children are provided home or hospital instruction on an individual case basis. At the present time, current trends in the United States indicate that there is only limited use of self-contained special classrooms for the physically handicapped.

Speech Handicapped

Van Riper (1963) has defined speech as "defective when it deviates so far from the speech of other people that it calls attention to itself, interferes with communication, or causes its possessor to be maladjusted" (p.16). A further delineation is made between speech disorders of a "functional" or "organic" nature. Functional speech disorders are ones in which no discernible deviations of physical structure appear to exist as in the case of articulation and stuttering problems (Hull, 1963). In contrast, organic speech disorders appear to emanate from underlying structural defects (e.g., cleft palate and cerebral palsy speech). Johnson (1959) has listed the following types of severe speech disorders among school children: (1) articulation; (2) voice; (3) stuttering; (4) cleft palate and lip; (5) delayed speech development; (6) cerebral palsy and other types of

neuro-muscular impairment; and (7) miscellaneous fluency and rate problems. Articulation problems rank as the most prevalent of the speech disorders.

Speech therapy is one of the most commonly provided ancillary services of special education. These services are usually allocated in the following manner: 75 percent in grades K through second, 18 percent in grades 3 and 4, and 7 percent in grades 5 through 12. Current programs give major recognition to the early identification and remediation of children with speech and language problems. Instruction is provided two or three times weekly on either an individual or small group basis in therapy sessions ordinarily lasting for 30 minutes. A minimum of 60 minutes of speech and language therapy per week is usually recommended. Current program trends indicate that increasing emphasis in speech therapy services is being given to identification and service to children with major language disorders and/or poor language development.

Hearing Impaired

The hearing impaired are usually divided into two groups according to degree of hearing loss - the deaf and the hard of hearing. Although the auditorially handicapped are often divided into two groups for educational purposes, it is apparent that hearing losses vary along a continuum from insignificant

to total. In educational terms, the deaf can be defined as comprising those children "in whom the sense of hearing, either with or without a hearing aid, is insufficient for interpreting speech" (Wooden, 1963). The hard of hearing consist of those children "in whom the loss of hearing is educationally significant, but whose residual hearing is sufficient for interpreting speech with, if not without, a hearing aid" (Wooden, 1963, p. 344). The U.S.O.E. estimated incidence of deaf children is 0.1 percent of the school population while hard of hearing children make up an estimated 0.5 percent of the school-age population. Approximately 63 percent of deaf and hard of hearing children receive educational services in public school programs (Mackie, 1964).

Several kinds of facilities are used in the United States to provide educational services for auditorially handicapped children. The type of educational service recommended is dependent upon a number of factors including (1) age at onset of impairment, (2) extent and nature of loss, (3) intelligence and other learning considerations, (4) presence of other handicaps, and (5) ability to use residual hearing. Because of the major difficulties hearing impaired children encounter in acquiring speech and language skills, a strong preschool and parent education program is imperative as a component of a comprehensive educational service.

Visually Impaired

The term "visually impaired" encompasses two groups of children--the blind and the partially sighted. The essential distinctions made between blind and partially sighted children are based on both the degree of useful vision they possess and the media they use to read. Ashcroft (1963) defines blind children as those "who have so little remaining useful vision that they must use braille as their reading medium" (p. 414). The partially sighted, in contrast, comprise those children "who retain a relatively low degree of vision and can read only enlarged print or those who have remaining vision making it possible for them to read limited amounts of regular print under very special conditions" (Ashcroft, 1963, p. 414). The legal definition of blindness is a visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the best possible correction or a restriction in the field of vision to an angle subtending an arc of 20 degrees or less (American Foundation for the Blind, 1961). Using essentially a visual acuity criterion, the partially sighted are defined as those who have remaining visual acuity between 20/200 and 20/70 in the better eye with the best correction or who, in the opinion of the eye specialist, can benefit from appropriate special education services (Hathaway, 1959).

Several different administrative plans are employed to provide services to visually impaired children. The more common approaches include the itinerant teacher, the resource teacher, the special class, or residential school placement. The itinerant teacher, resource teacher and special class arrangements represent services provided primarily by local school districts. The essential differences among these three options reside in the amount and type of service provided as well as in the ratio of time spent in the regular classroom to time spent in a special classroom setting. The residential school plan is a self-contained, educational program which primarily serves blind rather than partially sighted children (Ashcroft, 1963). Recent statistics indicate that approximately 65 percent of the visually handicapped children given special education services are accommodated in local public school programs, while 35 percent of the children are educated in residential school settings (Mackie, 1964).

Emotionally Disturbed/Socially Maladjusted

While considerable overlap is inherent in the categories "emotionally disturbed" and "socially maladjusted", the terms are not considered synonymous for educational purposes. Pate (1963) defines an emotionally disturbed child as one whose "reactions to life situations are so personally unrewarding and so inappropriate as to be unacceptable to his peers and adults"

(p. 242). For educational purposes, he further states that a child is disturbed when his behavior is so inappropriate that regular class attendance (1) would be disrupting for the rest of the class, (2) would place undue pressure on the teacher, or (3) further the disturbance of the pupil. The socially maladjusted child is defined as a chronic juvenile offender who persistently refuses to conform to minimal and acceptable standards of conduct required in regular school classrooms (Pate, 1963). Pate (1963) suggests the most obvious and salient difference between the categories "socially maladjusted" and "emotionally disturbed" is that the former connotes a sociological difficulty. A common characteristic of children in either category is the frequent manifestation of concomitant school-related learning problems. Thus, it is often difficult in many cases to differentiate unequivocally among the categories of emotionally disturbed, socially maladjusted and special learning difficulties.

Educational, as well as ancillary psychiatric and social work services, are provided for the emotionally disturbed and/or socially maladjusted in a variety of settings. Among the more common types of programs are those in (1) private day or residential schools which may include both intensive educational and psychiatric services, (2) special classes and ancillary services in out-patient community mental health centers, and

(3) special classes in regular elementary or secondary schools. No matter what organizational design is used to provide school instruction to disturbed or socially maladjusted children, all programs require the maintenance of low teacher-pupil ratios along with adequate supporting services from other disciplines (e.g., psychology, guidance and counseling, social work and psychiatry). Since the cost of providing services to these children is high, adequate population and financial bases are essential.

Prevalence Estimates

Translation of enrollment projections into prevalence estimates has been accomplished by using data from the U.S. Office of Education and from a recently completed study of special education in northeastern Minnesota. Prevalence estimates obtained for the U.S.O.E. are for the nation as large and tend to be inflated in certain categories. This is especially true with the physically handicapped category, as much of the data were collected during the time when polio was still a severe problem. Estimated prevalence figures from the Northeast Study were based upon a student population of approximately 87,500. Unlike the U.S.O.E. figures, estimated prevalence obtained from the Northeast Study tends to be low in some categories. This is especially true in the category of emotionally disturbed/socially maladjusted, as there is a

reluctance to classify children into this category, even though their behavior is characteristic of the categorical definition. Thus, it is the opinion of the study team that the true prevalence figures in the Albert Lea-Austin area probably fall somewhere between those estimates obtained for the U.S.O.E. and in the Northeast Study.

Exhibits IX and X present tables of estimated handicapping conditions for the Albert Lea and Austin area cooperatives, respectively. In each table an estimate is derived from data of the U.S.O.E. and Northeast Study. For example, based upon the Northeast data, in Exhibit IX, 149 children are projected to have some form of mental retardation. This figure is arrived at by multiplying the Northeast estimated prevalence (1.27%) times the base population (11,750) for the Albert Lea area. The figure 270 from the U.S.O.E. is calculated the same way, except the U.S.O.E. prevalence of 2.3% ($2.3\% \times 11,750$) was used. The same format is followed throughout the remainder of the table for Albert Lea and also for the data presented in Exhibit X for the Austin area cooperative. (The Austin area estimates are derived from a base population of 9,000.) As indicated previously, within the two categories (physically handicapped and emotionally disturbed/socially maladjusted), estimates based upon the Northeast and U.S.O.E. data are significantly different. For physically handicapped

EXHIBIT IX
ESTIMATED PREVALENCE OF HANDICAPPING
CONDITIONS FOR THE ALBERT LEA AREA COOPERATIVE
(11,750 base population)

Categories	N.E. Est. Preval- ence ¹	USOE Est, Preval- ence ²	Albert Lea Projections Based on N.E.	Albert Lea Projections Based on USOE
<u>Mentally Retarded-Total</u>	1.27%	2.3%	149	270
Trainable Mentally				
Retarded	.28%	.3%	33	35
Educable Mentally				
Retarded	.99%	2.0%	116	235
<u>Physically Handicapped-Total</u>	.37%	2.0%	43	235
Orthopedically Handicapped ³	.28%	1.0%	33	117
Health Impaired	.09%	1.0%	10	118
<u>Speech Handicapped⁴</u>	3.5%	3.5%	411	411
<u>Hearing Impaired-Total</u>	.13%	.6%	15	71
Deaf	.05%	.1%	6	12
Hard of Hearing	.08%	.5%	9	59
<u>Visually Impaired-Total</u>	.33%	.09%	38	11
Blind	.07%	.03%	8	4
Partially Sighted	.26%	.06%	30	7
<u>Emotionally Disturbed/ Socially Maladjusted</u>	.08%	2.0 %	9	235
GRAND TOTAL:	5.68%	10.49%	667	1233

¹While data from private schools K-12 were not used in this study, the estimated prevalence based on public school enrollment figures gives a base to make such estimates.

²U.S. Office of Education projections, reported in L.M. Dunn, Exceptional Children in the Schools (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1963).

³Includes some multiply handicapped children.

⁴Data not available. The U.S. Office of Education figure was used in making projections.

EXHIBIT X

ESTIMATED PREVALENCE OF HANDICAPPING
CONDITIONS FOR THE AUSTIN AREA COOPERATIVE
(9,000 base population)

Categories	N.E. Est. Preval- ence ¹	USOE Est. Preval- ence ²	Austin Projections Based on N.E.	Austin Projections Based on USOE
<u>Mentally Retarded-Total</u>	1.27%	2.3%	114	207
Trainable Mentally				
Retarded	.28%	.3%	25	27
Educable Mentally				
Retarded	.99%	2.0%	89	180
<u>Physically Handicapped-Total</u>	.37%	2.0%	33	180
Orthopedically Handicapped ³	.28%	1.0%	25	90
Health Impaired	.09%	1.0%	8	90
<u>Speech Handicapped⁴</u>	3.5%	3.5%	315	315
<u>Hearing Impaired-Total</u>	.13%	.6%	12	54
Deaf	.05%	.1%	5	9
Hard of Hearing	.08%	.5%	7	45
<u>Visually Impaired-Total</u>	.33%	.09%	30	8
Blind	.07%	.03%	6	3
Partially Sighted	.26%	.06%	24	5
<u>Emotionally Disturbed/ Socially Maladjusted</u>	.08%	2.0%	7	180
GRAND TOTAL:	5.68%	10.49%	511	944

¹While data from private schools K-12 were not used in this study, the estimated prevalence based on public school enrollment figures gives a base to make such estimates,

²U.S. Office of Education projections, reported in L.M. Dunn, Exceptional Children in the Schools (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1963)

³Includes some multiply handicapped children.

⁴Data not available. The U.S. Office of Education figure used was in making projections.

children, the prevalence rate is probably closer to the figures based upon the estimated prevalence in northeast Minnesota. For emotionally disturbed/socially maladjusted children, the true estimate is probably closer to the U.S.O.E. estimate.

In summary, the true number of handicapped children would probably fall somewhere between the figures based upon the Northeast Study and U.S.O.E. estimates. Until each and every child in the area is examined individually, the exact number of handicapped children cannot be determined accurately. However, based upon the information available, it is the judgment of the study team that within the Albert Lea area there are about 900 to 1000 children who could and should be served by some form of special education program. In the Austin area cooperative, that number is probably between 700 and 800 children. Not until extensive programs are developed will the true number of handicapped children be identified or adequate services become available to them.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE INTER DISTRICT COOPERATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

CHAPTER V
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE INTER DISTRICT
COOPERATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

* The recommendations in this chapter are based upon the assumptions stated in the first chapter of this report. No school district in this study has a sufficient student population to provide economically and effectively a comprehensive, high quality special education for all of its handicapped children. Such a program is essential for the social, emotional, educational, and pre-vocational needs of exceptional children.

Some sense of restraint should be apparent in the recommendations which follow. While the clear intent of this study was to go beyond mere consideration of special education programming, some recommendations could be made which are quite idealistic. However, there is recognition by the project staff that such recommendations would be impractical if they could not be implemented because of conditions existing at present.

The recommendations which follow are not intended to be long-term in nature. Inter district cooperative programs must evolve and change as the educational needs and considerations emerge. Nonetheless, it is the opinion of the project staff that the recommendations of this study, if implemented, will form valued components for both the present and future comprehensive programs

for handicapped children and youth now residing in all of the school districts included in this study. These districts should not feel confined to the areas and recommendations offered in this report. The districts probably will find that there are other areas and activities related to special education which could become meaningful and accomplished efficiently if done on a uniform, cooperative basis.

RECOMMENDATION ONE

TWO INTER DISTRICT COOPERATIVES FOR SPECIAL
EDUCATION SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED WITH AUSTIN
AND ALBERT LEA AS HOST DISTRICTS

A natural recommendation of this study might have been for a single inter district cooperative for special education programs comprised of all districts included in the project. Two major factors militated against such a recommendation -- the size of the student populations and the geographical locations of the various schools.

The first chapter of this report emphasized the importance of the size of the student enrollment in planning and implementing an inter district agreement for cooperation in special education. The districts under consideration here have the unusual feature of the presence of two major cities with approximately the same student population and the greatest proportion of the total number of students in all schools. If two cooperative inter district programs

were formed, they each would have approximately 10,000 students. This conforms to the recommendation of the Minnesota State Department of Education which suggests that most special education programs and services can be provided with this student enrollment. Other recommendations in this chapter will deal with programs and practices for which the two cooperatives can further join for greater effectiveness and efficiency.

The districts which should be considered as part of the Albert Lea inter district project are Glenville, Emmons, Wells, Alden, Freeborn, New Richland, and Ellendale. Other schools which might be considered as possible participants with the Albert Lea project are Minnesota Lake, Frost, Bricelyn, and Webster. The districts which should be members of the Austin inter district program are Lyle, Rose Creek, Adams, Grand Meadow, LeRoy, and Elkton. Another possible member is the Blooming Prairie district.

The organization of the inter district programs in this manner gives the Albert Lea cooperative a greater number of schools and a somewhat larger student population. However, this is the best arrangement considering the location of the districts and the transportation patterns.

At the present time Minnesota law provides no choice of inter-district cooperative arrangement other than a voluntary cooperative founded on the "host district" concept. For purposes of reimbursement, a host district must be the sponsoring school district for all

of the programs conducted under the auspices of the cooperative, for teacher employment and retirement benefits, and for whatever legal entity is required to execute the program. Albert Lea and Austin should each serve in the capacity of the host district in their respective inter district projects. This recommendation is based on the fact that they have the largest school enrollments and the most extensive special education programs. They are the natural centers for the inter district programs.

One advantage of having two separate inter district programs for special education is that they do not have to be identical in organization or operation. There is the opportunity to "tailor make" each inter district program to conform to the needs of the member districts. Each cooperative will have its own considerations of population, financial base, availability of housing, present and projected programs in special education, and attitudes towards an inter district program. The "host district" concept does not interfere with the independent and democratic development of each inter district program.

RECOMMENDATION TWO

EACH OF THE INTER DISTRICT COOPERATIVES
SHOULD FORM A GOVERNING UNIT TO ADMINISTER
ITS TOTAL PROGRAM

Initial planning for each inter district cooperative program must be done by a group representative of each school district.

Only a group representative of each school district can initiate a concept of joint planning and programming since participation and cooperation of each district is a basic requirement of an inter-district plan. The initial meeting of each inter district program should be convened by the superintendents of the proposed host districts. A chairman and secretary should be named by the group at the first meeting to assure necessary continuity and meeting structure. A membership composed of superintendents from each district would provide an accurate reflection of the needs and views of member districts. It would also permit more expeditious decisions as they relate to the inter district program.

There are three vital areas which must be discussed and agreement reached by the group composed of all member districts of each cooperative. These should be carefully considered in the initial stages of the formation of the inter district program. The three areas are:

1. Type of Inter district Cooperative Arrangement
2. Financing of the Inter district Program
3. Governance of the Cooperative Program

Type of Inter district Cooperative Arrangement

There are various ways that a cooperative can be organized. There are informal arrangements in which each district has its own special education program for certain categories of exceptional children along with supportive services in areas in which there is

a sufficient population base. Other programs and services may be provided on a cooperative basis by one school district assuming the responsibility. There are also cooperatives that are more formal in nature and structure. In these the boards of education of the member school districts execute a written joint agreement contract which can, but does not necessarily have to, spell out operational policy. This could include responsibilities of the member districts, services to be assigned to the cooperative program, methods of computing program costs, hiring personnel, and other matters. Agreement should also be reached on the amount of centralization of the special education program which should be in the larger host districts.

The recommendation of this study is to create a formal arrangement in which each district executes a written joint agreement contract. Such an arrangement provides better control of special education programs and services as well as unified direction and philosophy. Although districts must surrender some degree of local control over the special education programs, this loss can be more than balanced in the quality and breadth of services made available. In addition it provides each district with some security regarding the inter district program.

Financing of the Inter district Program

A matter that must have absolute agreement is that of finances. There must be a determination of program costs and budget including

such matters as capital outlay, facilities, maintenance, and administrative costs. It must be precisely determined, too., how costs will be computed and payments will be made. The host district should not be expected to assume the full financial burden for the inter district program during the school year. This is especially true during the first year of operation of the inter district program because special education aids are not received until the fall of the following school year. A system of prepayments and/or periodic payments should be established.

The study group recommends that each inter district cooperative program in special education avail itself of possible opportunities to secure funds from other sources. The larger population and geographic base enhances these opportunities. Such efforts do require initiative and planning, however. There are, of course, general state aids for special education programs. The districts may wish to channel Title I allocations into special education programs to capitalize on special education reimbursement as well as the Title I funds. Innovative programs could possibly receive some Title III funds. This study was completed with funding from Title VI. Generally, priority for funding has been given to employment of special education leadership personnel. Services of a Vocational Adjustment Coordinator possibly could be obtained with minimal cost to the districts because of the state and federal funding involved. Patterns of state, federal, and private financing often change, and inter district programs must be attuned to new possibilities.

Governance of the Cooperative Program

Some structure must be agreed upon for the governing and control of the ongoing inter district special education program. There is no specific way that this governance must be accomplished. For example, the districts may wish to continue the initial arrangement of having all districts participate in program deliberations and decisions. On the other hand, the districts may decide to have a smaller board of control composed of selected members of the cooperative. Four main points should be observed in the formation of any governing body.

1. Regular meetings should be scheduled with prepared agendas.
2. The host district should be a member of any governing board in order to enhance efficiency.
3. The Director of Special Education for the inter district program should serve as an ex officio member of the governing body and generally assume some responsibility for its operation.
4. There should be periodic meetings of the entire membership of the inter district cooperative.;

The memberships of the two inter district programs should consider the possibility of having at least two joint meetings each year. There would be many advantages to considering programs and projects jointly. Since each inter district program develops independently except for certain programs, there would also be value in an exchange of opinions and ideas. Resource persons from outside the districts could be invited to joint meetings.

RECOMMENDATION THREE

SEPARATE DIRECTORS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
SHOULD BE EMPLOYED FOR EACH OF THE TWO
INTER DISTRICT PROGRAMS

The employment of a qualified special education administrator for each inter district program should be a priority consideration. A joint administrator; for the two inter district programs probably could not function effectively. It seems likely that the demands made on his time, possible conflicts between the two organizations, geographic proximity, and other considerations would make employment of a single administrator a less desirable alternative.

The recommendation for two separate administrators is consistent with the recommendation of the Minnesota State Department of Education which states that a special education leadership position is needed when the enrollment approaches 5,000 students. Each cooperative has double that number of students.

The project staff strongly feels that a special education administrator is imperative when a cooperative venture is beginning and establishing many of the matters of precedent, philosophy, practices, and programs. It is necessary that a qualified person give competent direction and coordination to the special education program even in the earliest stages of any inter district cooperative arrangement.

Austin is fortunate in that it has a qualified special education administrator on its staff who has been actively involved

in some phases of the consideration of an inter district special education program. It seems appropriate that he continue in the capacity of Director of Special Education for the inter district program. Albert Lea has no qualified special education administrator. Consequently, the securing of a person for this position should be an immediate concern of the Albert Lea inter district project.

These inter district cooperative arrangements dictate that the administrations of the several districts jointly determine and define the qualifications, responsibilities, and relationships of its special education administrator. The person should meet the requirements for certification by the State Department of Education as a supervisor of special education. This is necessary to receive reimbursement for salary costs under special education aids. The Director should also be knowledgeable about special education programming for a broader spectrum of students with educational handicaps including those children with special learning disabilities.

The functions and responsibilities of the Director of Special Education reflect the nature and needs of the inter district program.

The functions of special education administrators vary as Greatly as the different situations in which they work. It might be expected that each of the two inter district programs could perceive the functions and responsibilities of its special education

administrator in different ways due to a number of factors. These variables include the size and kinds of populations served, the nature of responsibilities assigned to special education programs, and the internal organization and administrative framework within which special education functions are performed. However, at the minimum it should be expected that the special education administrator provide leadership and supervision in planning and program development, administration and program coordination, staff development, and program evaluation. Each Director of Special Education should be responsible to the governing organization of that cooperative inter district program. The relationship of the special education administrator to the administrators of member districts should also be specified. The Director of Special Education, however, must be delegated sufficient authority to function in an efficient, expeditious, and effective manner.

A written job description or job design should be formulated for each special education administrator. This statement can be useful in charting the course the Director of Special Education takes in administering the activities of his inter district cooperative. The assignment of roles and responsibilities to the Director of Special Education also must come from within the structure of the cooperative arrangement. There are job descriptions available in the professional literature, from other school districts, and from other sources. But the essential point is that the job

description reflects the needs, perceptions, and desires of the member school districts. Consideration might be given to a recent survey conducted by Newman (1970). The results could serve as a background and basis for considering specific aspects of a job description for the Director of Special Education. The tasks which were indicated as needed in the administration of special education programs have been summarized this way:

1. To plan and provide adequate educational classes and services needed by individual districts.
2. To coordinate the various services that are available within the school and community.
3. To formulate the structure through which communication will flow in all directions including communication within the school structure and with parents and community.
4. To assist in securing the necessary teaching and ancillary personnel for carrying out the processes of special education.
5. To make the necessary decisions involving the educational process and to serve as the instructional leader.
6. To compile and complete the local and state accounting and reporting forms.
7. To assist in the fiscal planning and implementing of funds for special education classes and services.
8. To conduct research to assist in determining the appropriateness and successes of the classes and services.
9. To bring about the dissemination of current research findings through appropriate in-service meetings, work shops, or other means directly involving special education personnel.

10. To continually evaluate the curricular approaches and the pupils' responses to these approaches and to evaluate the appropriateness of the special education personnel.

It is incumbent on the special education administrator that he establish a close working relationship with superintendents and principals in order to assure their active participation and cooperation in developing and coordinating the special education program with the established educational program. Emphasis should also be placed on consultation with teachers, principals, and other staff members concerning the special education needs of specific children. The Director of Special Education must be active in planning appropriate interventions or program alternatives to mediate properly between the child's special education needs and the tasks of educational development.

In order to function efficiently, the Directors should be officed in Albert Lea and Austin. The necessary office equipment, clerical staff, transportation allowances, and other operational assistance should be provided. The Directors should also be given opportunities to attend appropriate professional meetings and conferences.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR

EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS SHOULD
BE DEVELOPED IN EACH OF THE TWO
INTER DISTRICT SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Special education has undergone and continues to undergo changes in emphasis and outlook. In the past attention has been chiefly devoted to "categories" of exceptional children such as the mentally retarded, blind, deaf, or emotionally disturbed. These categories are still being used because they are traditional, understandable, and accepted by many general educators as well as the community in general. However, categories of handicaps represent a "medical model" of special education rather than an "educational model." There are many criticisms of thinking in terms of "categories." Among these are the tendencies to stereotype individuals and assign characteristics which are not accurate, Often, some kind of stigma is attached. Recent research by Rosenthal (1968) indicates such labeling or categorizing often creates a "self-fulfilling prophecy" to the detriment of the development of the handicapped child. Another reason that categorization is inappropriate is that it really contributes little or nothing to the educational development of a student. It does not describe his individual needs, learning patterns, or other important considerations for him as an individual.

Special education now emphasizes flexible approaches to meeting all of the individual needs of children based upon thorough

diagnosis, educational planning, and prescriptive teaching. The cornerstone on this process is careful assessment. It tells how a child learns, under what circumstances, in what manner, using what modalities, and capitalizing on what materials. Such a complete diagnosis which leads to educational planning and programming not only implies, but necessitates, the presence of diagnostic and educational specialists.

It is thought to be of major importance that the most specific program recommendation in this study for both inter district cooperatives is one dealing with the establishment of educational diagnostic service units. This recommendation is significant because the project consultants firmly believe that diagnostic service units must be part of a special education model for the districts, now, and in the immediate future. Without a dynamic educational assessment system, the special education program is likely to be quite pedestrian. Of even greater concern, it would not meet the educational needs of students with all degrees of disability.

There are different models for assessment systems. Some use community resources. Others rely heavily upon district personnel. It is essential that a diagnostic unit contain school psychologists, school social workers, methods and materials specialists, and educational diagnosticians. A full complement of these personnel is presently not available in either inter district special

education program. Priority consideration should be given to the employment of such personnel. The project consultants feel that it would be better to develop one, fully functional, diagnostic unit to serve both inter district programs if it is not possible to obtain enough qualified personnel for both. Nonetheless, it must be underscored again that the objective for the immediate future should be to establish separate units to serve each of the inter district programs.

The recommendations of assessment systems directly or indirectly implies several things. First, there is an emphasis on the special learning disabilities model. A carefully planned and developed special learning disabilities program with built in quality control features can do much to meet the needs of a wide spectrum of students who are handicapped in the educational process. Such a program must emphasize diagnostic procedures, prescriptive and individualized programming of instruction, and careful evaluation and follow-up.

The problem of personnel is an essential one. School psychologists and school social workers have a necessary role in the diagnostic service unit. It is crucial that the districts, either through their own staffs or through contracted services with other agencies, provide these services. It is the assertion of the project staff that these services can be most adequately integrated into the inter district special education program when

the psychologists and social workers are members of the project staff and under the direction of the Director of Special Education.

In order to establish a program for children with special learning disabilities it is also necessary to employ a professional person with training and skills in the diagnosis of learning disabilities as well as individualized prescriptive teaching methodologies and materials. The role of this person should be more consultation and planning rather than direct teaching of children. He should work directly with classroom teachers and supplemental tutors in developing and implementing individualized programs of instruction for students with special learning disabilities. This role will probably require a degree of capability which will not be possessed by either Director of Special Education. This direct service position is an important one for the development and success of the special learning disabilities program.

The recommendation of a diagnostic service unit for each inter district program also implies the use of prescriptive teaching techniques. This practice means the formation of instructional objectives for a child. The service unit must also have materials geared to the objectives and which permit students to proceed toward suitable educational goals. There has to be provision for diagnosis of pupil skills and abilities and continuous monitoring of pupil progress. Obviously, both the special learning disabilities teacher and the regular classroom teacher play important roles in helping each student to achieve the objectives delineated for him.

The use of an assessment service unit, special learning disabilities program, and prescriptive instruction hinge on the involvement of the classroom teacher. Although such involvement is essential, it is difficult to implement because of time limitations. The dimension of the total service which needs greatest emphasis is providing the regular classroom teacher with assessment information, the specialized teaching techniques, and other knowledge which can enhance the educational experiences for all students. It is this dimension which has the potential of major impact on the total educational program of the inter district cooperative.

Like many other organizations, the inter district special education program must solve the problem of effective patterns of communication. This includes upward and downward dimensions of communication as well as horizontal transmissions. Probably no special education program is so crucially affected by the need for good communication among the professional staff as that of special learning disabilities. Without good channels of communication between all professionals involved in the education of individual students, the special learning disabilities program may still fall short of its objectives. The concept of a "team approach" is often overworked and overblown, but this is the essence of a successful program to remedy the special learning disabilities of individual students. The diagnostic service unit is an integral part of the educational "team."

RECOMMENDATION FIVE

A SINGLE PROGRAM CONSTELLATION TO SERVE
STUDENTS WITH LOW-INCIDENCE HANDICAPPING
CONDITIONS SHOULD BE DEVELOPED JOINTLY
BY THE TWO INTER DISTRICT COOPERATIVES

Low-incidence handicapping conditions include visual impairment, hearing impairment, orthopedically handicapped, multiple handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, and the trainable mentally retarded. These conditions usually require a base student population of 20,000 or more for proper sequential programming and supportive services. It is unlikely that each inter district cooperative program alone could provide the full scope of services which are required. When the two inter district programs are combined, however, a better student population base as well as financial base is obtained.

It should be emphasized that this recommendation does not mean single stations for those with each handicapping condition. Rather, it does suggest that the two inter district cooperatives jointly plan and program for children with these handicapping conditions.

The following statistics were revealed in the questionnaires completed by the districts:

	NUMBER OF STUDENTS WITH HANDICAPS		
	Vision	Hearing	Physically Handicapped
Elementary	20	51	75
Junior High	5	10	36
Senior High	4	11	37

There is no accurate identification of the severity of the handicaps. It is suggested that the two inter district programs complete a careful census of handicapped students which includes the severity of the handicap and the type of programming which is required. Children with some mild handicaps can be handled with little special education intervention. There are other cases which can be dealt with using a resource model. More involved cases require both intensive and extensive services.

The two inter district programs combined could feasibly employ at least part-time resource personnel for the visually impaired or orthopedically handicapped. Austin, in its preschool program for deaf children, has the initial elements of a comprehensive program. More extensive programs for older children could be developed jointly by the two inter district cooperatives together.

Seventeen trainable mentally retarded students were identified in this study. They are in classes in Wells, Albert Lea, and Austin.

It has been the experience of other districts that more trainable students are identified once educational programs are provided for them. Each of the programs now available includes a broad age range of students. This fact makes meaningful and sequential programming difficult. The two inter district programs might consider combining the total program for trainable retarded children in a single district. Another alternative would be to serve the younger students in one district and the older students in another district. The project staff feels that it is imperative that better grouping procedures be accomplished, and this is most feasible through the combined efforts of the two inter district programs.

The enrollment projections for seriously emotionally disturbed/ socially maladjusted students were presented in Chapter IV along with data for other handicapping conditions. This information suggests limited need for a program serving students who cannot be educated and/or contained in regular classroom settings. A program for emotionally disturbed and socially maladjusted students would not be feasible or practical without the cooperation of the two inter district programs. Such a program, if instituted., should emphasize the return of the student to the mainstream educational program as soon as possible. It should also have access to supportive personnel as well as diagnostic and treatment services.

An important element of any special education program for children with low-incidence handicapping conditions is that it have appropriate consultive resources. The two inter district programs combined could more effectively employ and utilize such consultants than to attempt such resources separately.

It must be noted realistically that there will be some children for whom it simply would not be feasible to provide special education programs and services directly. In these few instances the districts might also cooperate in terms of placement and transportation.

The thrust of this entire recommendation is that the establishment of two inter district special education programs should not become a barrier to cooperation between them for dealing with some handicapping conditions. This report has developed the point that a broader student population base is essential for some types of special education programming. Without cooperation between the two inter district programs, they will fail their mission of providing the best and most comprehensive special education services to all of their students.

RECOMMENDATION SIX

THE TWO INTER DISTRICT PROGRAMS SHOULD
JOIN FOR SOME SERVICES RELATED TO
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

This recommendation recognizes that there are services which are important adjuncts to the special education program. In many districts these services are ascribed lesser importance and given relatively little attention. One reason for less attention is that smaller numbers of pupils and staff make such services less feasible and practical. Cooperation between the two inter district programs is needed to make these services available and effective. Among the areas which might be considered for such cooperation between the inter district programs are in-service training, instructional materials centers, transportation, summer school programs, testing programs, and curriculum development.

In-service Training

In-service training of special education personnel can be accomplished best by the two cooperatives acting jointly. The personnel involved share common interests and problems. The financial costs involved in obtaining consultants for in-service programs would be ameliorated. An important feature is that such in-service meetings would promote cooperation among the personnel, of all of the districts and open lines of communication.

In-service training should not be limited to the special education staff. The two inter district programs combined should take the leadership in providing in-service programs to the entire instructional staff. Some topics, which are directly related to special education and general education, are classroom diagnosis and treatment of learning problems, identification of and techniques used with children with adjustment problems, and orientation to special education programs and services.

There is a continuing need for in-service courses in the new educational techniques, methodology, content, and other frontiers in education. Special education could assume some leadership in making such programs available to the entire staff.

Instructional Materials Centers

Special education, perhaps more than any other phase of education, needs to utilize a wide variety of information, materials, and resources. Unless these are made readily available to the staffs, the special education programs are likely to fall short of the goals of providing the most effective instruction and services to handicapped children. The need for instructional materials centers originally came from the area of mental retardation. Today, special learning disabilities programs require even greater amounts of material to meet the individual needs of students.

The prime objective of an instructional materials center should be to provide the framework and organization to give special education teachers, administrators, and other related personnel ready access to various kinds of materials, information, and research related to special education. The center could acquire and process information and materials related to special education. A special education materials center could also provide stimulation and support for special education development activities. As such, it should also be thought of as an integral part of the ongoing, in-service program for the entire professional staff.

A major part of the program of the instructional materials center should be to become an instructional materials depository which houses materials that have been designed for use with the specific learning problems of students. It is possible to develop an excellent instructional materials center by making use of the experiences and collections of other programs. There are instructional materials centers located in the midwest as well as the nation. The project consultants have been favorably impressed with the Educational Modulation Center in Olathe, Kansas. Initially, it would only be necessary to establish a basic special education materials library for the cooperating districts. This center would need to be expanded over a period of time. Reasons for the recommendation that the two inter district programs cooperate in this venture include reduction of cost per student, avoidance of

needless duplication of materials, and promotion of the value to all of the districts.

Transportation

One of the problems which often plagues inter district programs is that of transportation. Special education programs often become less effective and flexible because of the limitations and dictates of transportation. Transportation is crucial in inter-district special education programs because there is a reliance on centers for serving those with some disabilities. This study makes the recommendation that the two inter district programs cooperate in establishing special education classes for certain low incidence handicapping conditions. A correlate of this recommendation is that the two programs also cooperate in transportation arrangements in order to facilitate the operation of the special education programs.

Summer School Programs

Summer school programs for special education students are often limited by factors such as enrollment, transportation, and costs. Cooperation between the two inter district special education programs opens up greater possibilities for such programs. Summer school programs can be innovative in nature and provide experiences which are not typically available during the regular school year. They can enhance and enrich the special education program.

Summer school programs can also provide an opportunity to test new materials and methods for their applicability to the regular, special education program.

Testing Programs

Special education programs need to have information upon which to base diagnosis, programming, and evaluation. Standardized testing programs are a vital part of this process. It was the observation of the project staff that the present standardized testing programs in the districts bear little relationship to one another. There are many advantages to considering a standard testing program across all districts. The information obtained would be more meaningful since each district would have the same tests, procedures, and administration. Study could be made of the testing instruments which would be best to meet the objectives of the inter district programs. Local norms could be secured which give a more realistic appraisal of the needs of the special education program.

Curriculum Development

The development of a special education curriculum is of great importance for a number of reasons. First, there is little in the way of a well-defined and articulated special education curriculum in the districts involved in the study. Second, any special education curriculum should reflect the needs of the local area

rather than those of other areas. Third, the curriculum must provide for a sequential development in order to meet the needs of students at all levels.

The development of a special education curriculum should be through the combined efforts of the two inter district programs. There are common needs and interests. Some special education programs must be provided on a cooperative basis. The instructional materials center and in-service programs should be shared fully by both inter district programs. Thus, it seems natural that curriculum development should also be a cooperative project. Such an effort would reduce duplication of effort and would allow for best use of the talents on both special education staffs.

Summary

This recommendation has suggested several areas in which there could be cooperation for special education projects and services between the two inter district programs. There will be others which will be revealed in the deliberations and discussions among the districts. The kinds of programs, projects, and services for which there is cooperation are limited only by the vision of the member districts and their willingness to cooperate.

This study has focused on cooperation among the districts included in this project. These two inter district programs, however, should not be limited to cooperating only with schools

within their boundaries. Opportunities may exist for cooperation with other districts, individually or collectively, and with other facilities in efforts to meet better the special education needs of all students.

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

- American Foundation for the Blind, A teacher education program for those who serve blind children and youth. New York: Author, 1961.
- Ashcroft, S.C. Blind and partially seeing children. In L.M. Dunn (Ed.), *Exceptional children in the schools*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963.
- Committee of Ten Report, 1968. Unpublished report, California State Department of Education. Sacramento, California.
- Dunn, L.M. (Ed.), *Exceptional children in the schools*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963.
- Dunn, L.M. , Special education for the mildly retarded - is much of it justifiable? *Exceptional Children*. Vol. 35, Sept. 1968, pp. 5-22.
- Hathaway, W. Education and health of the partially seeing child. New York: Columbia University Press, 1959.
- Heber, R. A manual on terminology and classification in mental retardation. Williamantic, Conn,: The American Association on Mental Deficiency, 1961.
- Hull, F.M. Speech impaired children, in L.M. Dunn (Ed.), *Exceptional children in the schools*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963. pp. 285-338.
- Johnson, W. Children with speech and hearing impairments. Washington, D.C.: U.S.O.E. Bulletin, No. 5, 1959.
- Mackie, R.P. Special education reaches nearly two million people. School Life, 1964 (December).
- Mackie, R.P. Spotlighting advances in special education. Exceptional Children, 1965.
- Minnesota State Board of Education. Criteria recommendations. St. Paul, Minnesota, 1968, pp. 16-21.

- National Education Association, Population trends signal school needs, NEA Research Bulletin, Vol. 46, No. 1, March, 1968, pp. 24-25.
- Newman, Karen S. Administrative tasks in special education. Exceptional Children, Vol. 36, March 1970. pp. 521-524.
- Peter, L.J. Prescriptive Teaching. McGraw-Hill, New York, N.Y., 1965.
- Rosenthal, Robert, Gibson, L.F. Teacher expectations for the disadvantaged. Scientific America. April, 1968. pp. 19-23.
- Siegel, E. Learning disabilities; Substance or shadow? Exceptional Children, Vol. 34, 1968. pp. 433-438.
- Van Riper, C. Speech correction; principles and methods. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1963.
- Willenberg, E.P. Critical issues in special education: internal organization. Exceptional Children. March 1967, Vol. 33, pp. 511-512.
- Wishik, S.M. Handicapped children in Georgia: A study of prevalence, disability, needs and resources. American Journal of Public Health, 1956.
- Wooden, H.Z. Deaf and hard of hearing children. In L.M. Dunn (Ed.), Exceptional children in the schools. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963. pp. 339-412.